THE KANO MAMLUKS: ROYAL SLAVERY IN THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE, 1807-1903

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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Abstract

This study explores the social, cultural and political history of royal slavery in Kano Emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate between 1807-1903. The dissertation takes a comparative approach to the institution of royal slavery and argues that a "mamluk" style institution developed in Kano. Individuals were enslaved, trained and promoted in ways that reflected a broader Islamic pattern. However, the use of slave soldiers and officials was not an inevitable outgrowth of all Islamic state systems. Across the Sudanic belt, for example, both pre and post jihadist states faced problems of political legitimacy and authority. These problems were resolved in a variety of ways, and did not always include the use of royal slaves. Islam was but one, albeit important, variable that shaped the use of royal slaves in Africa and the Islamic Middle East. Thus, this study examines the interaction between institutions, ideas, events and people over time as part of the historical process. The use of royal slaves was related to the government that Islam as a religion *could* generate and to local historical circumstances "on the ground." There was a long history of royal slavery in Kano prior to the jihadist conquest of 1807 and this legacy was consciously drawn upon by the jihadist leaders to solidify their rule.

As the emirs of Kano attempted to increase their own personal control of the state they came to rely on slaves, whom they selected and promoted, because in theory, and often in practice, their "social

isolation" encouraged the development of a singular loyalty to the sovereign. Furthermore, as "outsiders," they could transgress cultural, social and political boundaries (or norms) even the ruler was beholden to obey. Slaves were valuable because they were amenable to control and coercion in ways which were profoundly different from the free population. They were feared because they were responsible to no person, idea or set of values beyond the ruler they served.

In practice the actual social world of royal slaves differed from the theoretical imperatives encouraging their use. They became part of the "state" and developed their own political and social cultures. Despite the theoretical absence of kin, royal slaves in Kano deliberately promoted kinship and similar bonds of loyalty and obligation among themselves and within the palace more generally. This contradiction is fundamental to understanding how the mamluk system operated in Kano. Royal slaves were seldom (if ever) content with their position. Royal slaves attempted to alter the social definitions of slave status by establishing families and a system of household apprenticeship that ensured they would dominate certain forms of knowledge. As royal slaves moved into positions of power, they were given the instruments that enabled them to "contest" their status as slaves.

This study is based on both oral and archival data. It focuses on three major royal slave titles: the *shamaki, dan rimi* and *sallama.* The experiences and ideology of the royal slave community are explored through the "voices" of the royal slaves themselves.

Acknowledgments

My greatest debt I owe to Paul Lovejoy, my supervisor, who supported the project in every way from its inception in 1993 to its completion in 1999. He provided crucial advice when needed, offered important criticisms of the text, and served as a formidable scholarly model. I hope my conclusions approach his high standards. I would also like to thank him for providing housing in Kaduna over the summer of 1995, and for access to his library and archival collection in Toronto. Sydney Kanya-Forstner and Martin Klein, members of my advisory committee, offered invaluable criticism and advice for which I thank them.

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Glossary

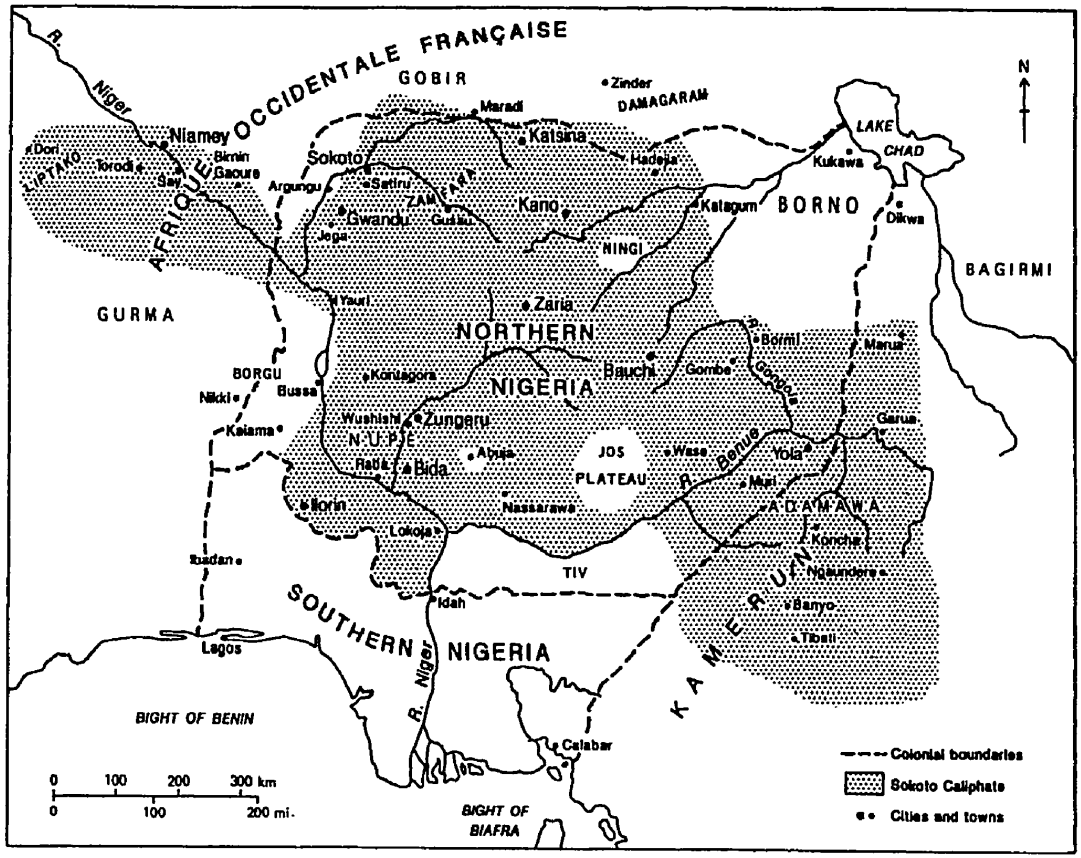
Note: all transliterations of Arabic words are in the Hausa form, except in particular cases where the Arabic form was used in Kano or is more accurate for the time and place. The original transliterations used in direct primary source quotations and documentary citations were retained.

amana	reciprocal trust, loyalty
asali	origins/kinship
asiri	secrets/secrecy
bacucane (p. cucanawa)	second generation slave
bait al-mal	treasury
basasa	pillage, the Kano Civil War
bayi (p. bawa)	slave
bayin sarki	slaves of the king/royal slaves
bindiga	guns
birni	fortified town
dar al-Islam	world of Islam
dogari (p. dogarai)	police-traditionally slaves
fadawa	courtiers/persons closely associated with the court/palace

gandu (p. gandaye)	large agricultural estate/plot of land farmed by father and (usually married) sons
gida (p. gidaje)	house/household
gidan sarki	emir's palace in Kano
hakimi (p. hakimai)	District Head/Territorial Chief
jakada (p. jakadu)	royal messenger or servant, traditionally a slave
jama'a	community of Muslims
jihad	Islamic holy war
kofa (p. kofofi)	gate
kwarkwara	concubinage
lifidi	cotton armour, usually worn by slave cavalry
mai gida	household head
malam	learned man/teacher
mamluk	military slave
masu sarauta	officials/title-holders
ribat	fortified settlement/town
rumbu	granary
sad'aka	concubine
sarki	king/emir/chief
Shari'a	Islamic law
talaka (p. talakawa)	commoner

ulama	Community of learned religious scholars and teachers, literally: "men of religious knowledge"
yara	boy, servant, freed slave
zakka	Yearly religious contribution or donation of a percentage of wealth. One of the five pillars of Islam and a religious duty/obligation

Map 1
The Sokoto Caliphate, c. 1903



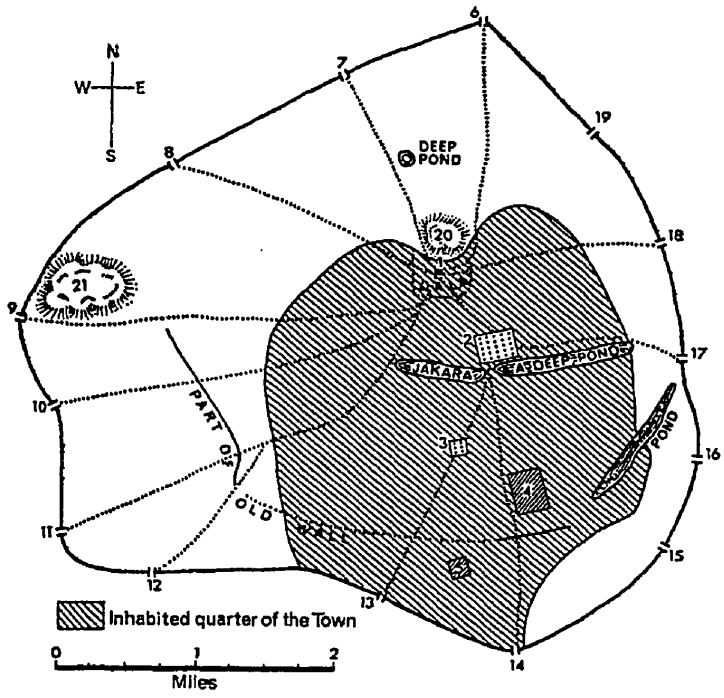
Source: Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*

Map 2
Kano Emirate and its Neighbours, c. 1910

Source: Christelow (ed.), *Thus Ruled Emir Abbas*

Map 3
Kano City

Kano



A PLAN OF KANO CITY *c.* 1851 AT THE TIME OF DR BARTH'S VISIT

1. Barth's quarters in Dalá. During his second stay in Kanó, he also resided in Dalá, at a short distance from his old quarters.
2. Great market-place.
3. Small market-place.
4. Palace of Governor.
5. Palace of Ghaladíma.
6. Kofa Mazúger.
7. Kofa-n-'Adama.
8. Kofa-n-Gúdan.
9. Kofa-n-Kansákkali.
10. Kofa-n-Limún, or Káboga.
11. Kofa-n-Dakanye, or Dukánie.
12. Kofa-n-Dakaina.
13. Kofa-n-Naïsa.
14. Kofa-n-Kúra.
15. Kofa-n-Nasaráwa.
16. Kofa-n-Máta.
17. Kofa-n-Wambay.
18. Kofa-n-Magardi.
19. Kofa-n-Rúa (shut on Barth's visit).
20. Mount Dalá.
21. Mount Kógo-n-dútsi.

Source: Hogben and Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*

Introduction

The Historical Background: Officials and Officialdom in Kano

Located mainly in modern northern Nigeria and southern Republic of Niger, the Sokoto Caliphate was founded between 1804-1809 during the *jihad* or holy war of Usman dan Fodio. The leaders of the *jihad* successfully conquered many of the local *Habe*[1] governments of the region, which were incorporated into the new state as emirates under the loose suzerainty of the Caliphate's twin capitals located at Sokoto and Gwandu. Kano was one of the most populous and prosperous cities in all of the Caliphate.[2] It was the economic centre of production and trade in the Caliphate, and a large portion of the economy was centred on slave-based agricultural production.[3] The population of the Caliphate as a whole was in the range of ten million, of which an estimated 2.5 million were slaves. In nineteenth century Kano, the population was likely in the range of 60,000 to 90,000, with a fair amount of seasonal fluctuation. Approximately one-half to one-

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[1]The term *Habe* comes from Fulfulde and means "indigene" or "native", but with a pejorative connotation. See Philip James Shea, "The Development of an Export Oriented Dyed Cloth Industry in Kano Emirate in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975) and R.C. Abraham, *A Dictionary of the Hausa Language* (London: University of London, 1968), 444, as cited by Shea: "original inhabitant of a country, as Hausas from the point of view of the Fulani."

[2]James Richardson called Kano "the London of the Soudan" as it was where the "money is." James Richardson, *Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa,* volumes I and II (London: Chapman and Hall, 1953), II, 309.

[3]For example, See Paul E. Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Journal of African History* 19, 3 (1978), 341-368, Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate (Islamic West Africa)" in *American Historical Review* 84 (1979), 1267-1292, Philip J. Shea, "Approaching the Study of Production in Rural Kano" in Bawuro M. Barkindo (ed.), *Studies in the History of Kano* (Ibadan: Heinmann, 1983), 93-116.

third of this number were slaves.[4] The base population of Kano city likely increased over the course of the nineteenth century. In the 1890's C.H. Robinson reported that the population was in the range of one-hundred thousand.[5] The population of Kano Emirate and the Caliphate was largely agrarian, composed of household units that farmed in the countryside.[6] Slaves were used by individual household units and more extensively by the political elite who owned or managed large estates.

Slavery [Hausa: *bauta*] in Hausaland has a long history. Slaves comprised about twenty-five to thirty percent of the population of Kano. Slavery as an institution was central to the political organization and economic prosperity of Kano and its environs. However, the position slaves occupied varied greatly. The vast majority were used in agricultural and craft production in both the urban centre of Kano and its rural periphery. Slavery and slave raiding were an integral part of the economic and political structure of Kano and the entire Caliphate. Paul E. Lovejoy has argued that enslavement was "a crucial institution

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[4]Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: the Course of Abolition in Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1 and Polly Hill, *Population, Prosperity and Poverty in Rural Kano 1900 and 1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 203. See also Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton and Walter Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, 1822, 1823, 1824,* volumes I and II (London: Dorf Publishers, 1985-originally published in 1828), II, 251 and Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1965-originally published in 1857), vol. I, 510; 523.

[5]C.H. Robinson, *Hausaland or Fifteen Hundred Miles Through the Central Soudan* (3rd Edition, 1900), 112-133. Monteil estimated the average daily attendance at the market from 25,000-30,000, figures with which C.H. Robinson concurred. See Robinson, "The Hausa Territories" in *Geographical Journal* 3, VIII (September 1896), 203.

[6]Michael Watts, *Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 60, and Hill, *Population, Prosperity and Poverty*, 66.

. . . [with] political order based on systematic enslavement."[7] Taxes were paid in slaves; non-Muslims captives were acculturated through slavery, and slaves laboured on large and small plantations producing foodstuffs and other goods for their owners.[8]

Both *Habe* and Hausa will be used to describe the government and administration of Kano before the jihadist conquest of the nineteenth century. Hausa is the preferred term, given the pejorative connotations of *Habe*, but, where the primary sources refer to *Habe* I have retained its use. Hausa is itself a linguistic and cultural term, referring generally to people who speak Hausa, follow the religion of Islam and adopt a shared, common culture. Although this is not the place for a discussion of ethnicity in Hausaland, it is clear that ethnicity was tied to a variety of social roles and occupations--people "became" Hausa or "became" Fulani while practising certain occupations for instance.[9] Kano was a "cosmopolitan" and "heterogeneous" trading city, and being from Kano [Hausa: *kanawa*] was an important feature of both Hausa and Fulani identity.[10] Hausa

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[7]Paul E. Lovejoy, "Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 201. See also David Tambo, "The Sokoto Caliphate Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, 2 (1976), 187-217.

[8]On taxes paid in slaves, see Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition,* volume I and II (London: Frank Cass, 1967-originally published in 1830), II, 112. On plantations, see Paul E. Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate," 348: "Plantations were a logical development in a state which had large numbers of slaves and where land was tightly controlled, and their establishment reflected the distribution of wealth and authority within the Caliphate." See also Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate (Islamic West Africa)" and Jan Hogendorn, "The Economics of Slave Use on Two 'Plantations' in the Zaria Emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* X, 3 (1977), 369-383.

[9]See, for example: Paul E. Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun. A History of Salt Production and Trade in the Central Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 252-278

[10]*Ibid.*, 53.

people came from varied backgrounds, and immigrants to Hausaland were regularly and readily assimilated into Hausa culture.[11] The Fulani speak Fulfulde, and are demarcated between urban or settled Fulani and the so-called "cattle" or nomadic Fulani. Fulani in the nineteenth century, and even to some extent today, maintain a distinctive culture, expressed in dietary habits, clothing and marriage patterns.[12] The ruling elite was drawn from the Fulani lineages and clans that conquered Kano during the *jihad*, and the notion of being Fulani was part of their identity. The distinction between Hausa and Fulani progressively eroded, however. Separate residential patterns are no longer the norm, while intermarriage was and is common.[13] Jihadist ideology stressed the equality of all Muslims, and it became very common for men to marry the daughters of the malams they studied under, who could be Kanuri, Hausa or Tuareg, for example.[14] The aristocracy also came to use Hausa as the "ruling" language.

The nineteenth century system of office-holding produced an elite social and political culture that was mentally and spatially centered on the palace in Kano city. The ideology of Kano officialdom was based on pre and post *jihad* political and social practice, as well as Islamic values and norms. Office-holders were collectively known as *masu sarauta* (the owners or possessors of office), and authority and the exercise of power were legitimated by the adoption and use of official

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[11]Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969),

[12]Priscilla Ellen Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili Legends in Kano" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Michigan, 1993), 48.

[13]*Ibid.*, 50.

[14]*Ibid.*, 50-51.

titles which bestowed both status and a variety of responsibilities on the holder. Authority is the right to make a particular decision and to command obedience; power is the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favourable decisions which are not of right allocated to the individuals or their roles.[15] Authority is "derived or delegated right, while power is the possession of manifest or latent control or influence over the actions of persons including oneself."[16] Royal slaves acquired both power and authority in Kano. By virtue of the possession of titles, they were in effect able to command others. By virtue of the relationship with the emir, they had the power to influence others.

The Emirs of Kano

Suleiman, 1807-1819
Ibrahim Dabo, 1819-1845
Usman Maje Ringim, 1846-1855, son of Dabo
Abdullahi Maje Karofi, 1855-1882, son of Dabo
Muhammad Bello, 1882-1893, son of Dabo
Tukur, 1893-1894, son of Bello
Aliyu, 1894-1903, son of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi
Abbas, 1903-1919, son of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi
Usman II, 1919-1926, son of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi
Abdullahi Bayero, 1926-1953, son of Abbas

Clients [Hausa: *bara*; pl. *barori*] attached themselves to office-holders in order to benefit from connections to persons of political influence. For office-holders, clients were an important gauge of status and represented a pool from which services could be claimed. In the nineteenth century, the Kano aristocracy was composed of

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[15]M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 18-19.
[16]*Ibid.*, 19.

hakimai [territorial chiefs or district heads][17] who held offices which gave them territorial jurisdiction over people and land scattered throughout the environs of Kano. The *hakimai* were drawn from aristocratic lineages which included members of the *sarki's* own family (e.g. uncles, sons or brothers). The second major group of office-holders were the major rural chiefs (or *tambari*) who controlled the formerly independent Kingdoms that had been conquered by Kano (e.g. Rano, Gaya, Dutse and Karaye). These *tambari* chiefs were generally drawn from local royal lineages and had significant military resources at their disposal.[18] Some titles were held only by princes (e.g. *ciroma, galadima*), others were held by the non-royal Fulani clans (e.g. *madaki, makama*). Still others were the preserve of the clerical or slave elite.

Offices were either hereditary [Hausa: *gado*] or non-hereditary [Hausa: *shigege*] and brought with them both rights and responsibilities. They were the central avenue to wealth and influence in nineteenth century Kano. Land was generally attached to each office, from which the holder was responsible for the collection of taxes, and from which the office-holder derived an income. These official estates were supervised through slave or free intermediaries

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[17]Following Garba, I use the term office-holder or district head rather than "fief-holder." A "feudal" interpretation of land tenure and administration under the Caliphate not only underestimates the importance of slavery, but ignores the fact that "fief-holders" administered land, they were territorial "chiefs," and did not claim proprietary rights over the land they administered. They were concerned with the collection of tax, and did not interfere in customary land rights and allocation of land on the local level. See Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death For Slavery*, 134-135 and Tijani Garba, "Taxation in some Hausa Emirates, c. 1860-1930," (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Birmingham, 1986).

[18]For a general discussion of pre and post jihad government See Sa'ad Abubakar, "The Emirate-Type Government in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. VII, No. 2, June 1974, 211-229.

[Hausa: *jakadu*].[19] In addition, some title-holders owned slaves and plantations not attached directly to their offices.[20]

The Kano Aristocracy c. 1882.[21]

Precedence	*Office*	*Clan*
1.	Galadima	Royal Sullubawa
2.	Madaki	Yolawa-"Kingmaker"
3.	Wambai	Royal Sullubawa
4.	Makama	Jobawa-"Kingmaker"
5.	Sarkin Dawaki Mai Tuta	Royal Sullubawa
6.	Sarkin Bai	Dambazawa-"Kingmaker"
7.	Dan Iya	Danejawa
8.	Sarkin Dawaki Tsakkar Gida	Royal Sullubawa
9.	Ciroma	Royal Sullubawa
10.	Turaki	Royal Sullubawa
11.	Tafida	Royal Sullubawa
12.	Sarkin Shanu	Client or Royal Sullubawa
13.	Dan Buram	Royal Sullubawa
14.	Dan Isa	Royal Sullubawa
15.	Dan Lawan	Royal Sullubawa
16.	Barde	Royal Sullubawa
17.	Dan Maje	Royal Sullubawa
18.	Dan Makwayo	Royal Sullubawa
19.	Dan Kadai	Royal Sullubawa
20.	Barde Kerarriya	Royal Sullubawa
21.	Dan Amar	Royal Client

The cultural meanings attached to the term office or *sarauta* were generally related to the status and roles that the office gave its occupant.[22] Offices were cultural and political constructions that defined and shaped the political and economic roles of state

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[19]See also Tijani Garba, "Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates c. 1860-1930," Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy: the Sarauta System and its Roles in Shaping the Society and Economy of Kano with Particular Reference to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," (Ph.D., unpublished, Amadu Bello University, 1982) and Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery.*

[20]Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate," 1267-1292 and Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate," 341-368.

[21]Taken from Adamu Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 1880-1940* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1978), 33.

[22]See G. Balandier, *Political Anthropology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 88-89

functionaries. As the products of a particular political culture, offices developed a variety of meanings for the political elite and the commoner alike. Primarily, they were viewed as a means to accumulate power and wealth.[23] Offices were also conceptualized as fields of knowledge, which often encompassed specific and important skills. In this regard, royal slave titles were partially organized around the duties the title-holder was expected to perform.

Power could only be exercised legitimately through the possession of an official title. Rituals of the court and symbols of power transformed slaves into office-holders, and allowed them to be governed by the political customs and traditions of the court. The adoption of titles formalized and regulated the participation of slaves in political life. Specifically, M.G. Smith has argued that the term office denoted "a unique titled office" that had: "determinate rights, powers, resources, responsibilities and relations with other units of similar character. "[24] Offices had roles in both the "political" and "administrative" domains.[25] They served to legitimate the exercise of power amongst the governing elite and were the means through which political decisions were translated into administrative action.[26] They were the primary sites of political competition for power: possession of

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[23]Accumulation was so central to the concept of "officialdom" that the British eventually placed title-holders on a fixed salary in order to limit their ability to accumulate wealth by virtue of the possession of office: "The titular offices should, when possible, be combined with an official position to which is attached a salary sufficient to support it, for otherwise, the influence of the title may be sufficient to enable the holder to extort unauthorized payments." NAK SNP 8/4 15/1917.

[24]M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano, 1350-1950* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 46-47.

[25]See M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1940*, 16-18.

[26]*Ibid.*, 15-17.

an office gave its holder the opportunity to participate in the creation of policy as well as the chance to execute those policies in the administrative structure of Kano government.

Some Major Royal Slave Titles, c. 1900

Shamaki
Dan Rimi
Sallama
Shettima
Sarkin Hatsi
Sarkin Dogarai
Kilishi
Kasheka
Jakadan Garko

Kano was economically, politically and religiously integrated into the Caliphate and the broader Islamic world. This was not entirely a nineteenth century phenomenon. By the fifteenth century: "[Hausaland was] fully integrated into the commercial and ideological nexus which linked the Western Sudanese societies together [and into] . . . the wide Islamic world."[27] North African traders and Islamic scholars helped to maintain and expand these links, as did Sufi brotherhoods. The government of the Caliphate was partially modelled on the Islamic governments of the Middle East.[28] The leaders of the *jihad* drew on a wide variety of writings and precedents with the goal of implementing Islamic law (*Shari'a*) and government across what had

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[27]R. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1971), 492. For a study of Islam in the colonial period, see for example: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

[28]On Islam in Africa, see Peter C. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1984) and Lamin Sannah, *The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

been in the eighteenth century a collection of independent and syncretist states. Usman dan Fodio became the commander of faithful or *amir al-mu'minin* and the former independent states became emirates tied by religion and political institutions to Sokoto. The *amir al mu'minin* delegated power to the emirs, who had particular religious and political duties to perform. The caliph was the overall political and spiritual head of the nation, but, as Last has argued, his authority was in the main derived from Islam: "although men might grow less enthusiastic for the jihad, they did not cease to recognize the Islamic tradition on which it was based."[29] Tribute was collected in each emirate and sent to Sokoto twice yearly. Islam was the central and defining force in this revolution, and the Sokoto *jihad* grew out of other West African *jihadist* movements.[30] The *jihad* was part of a long

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[29]Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Longman, 1967), 232.

[30]See Murray Last, "Reform in West Africa: the *Jihad* Movements of the Nineteenth Century" in J.F.A Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1985), 1-47, M. Hiskett, "The Nineteenth Century Jihads in West Africa" in John E. Flint (ed.), *Cambridge History of Africa* vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), David Robinson, *Chiefs and Clerics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Michael A. Gomez, *Pragmatism in the age of Jihad: The Precolonial State of Bundu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), John Ralph Willis, "The Torodbe Clerisy: A Social View" in *Journal of African History* XIX, 2 (1978), 195-212, David Robinson, "The Islamic Revolution of Futa Toro" in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* VIII, 2 (1975), 185-221, David Robinson, "Abdul Quadir and Shaykh Umar: A Continuing Traditional of Islamic Leadership in Futa Toro" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, 2 (1975), Martin A. Klein, "Social and Economic Factors in the Muslim Revolution in Senegambia" in *Journal of African History* XIII, 3 (1972), 419-441, Philip Curtin, "*Jihad* in West Africa: the Early Phases and Interrelations in Mauritania and Senegal" in *Journal of African History* 12, 1 (1971), 11-24, Marilyn Waldman, "The Fulani *Jihad*: a Reassessment" in *Journal of African History* VI, 3 (1965), 333-355, Marilyn Waldman, "A Note on the Ethnic Interpretation of the *jihad*" in *Africa* XXXVI, 2 (1966), 286-291, M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* XXV (1962), 589-591. See also M. Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman dan Fodio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) and Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate.*

tradition of Islamic learning and scholarship in the Western and Central Sudan.[31]

Usman dan Fodio first studied the Koran with his father, and eventually came to study in Agades with Jibril b. Umar, who had completed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Usman dan Fodio began preaching, writing and teaching in 1774-75 when he was twenty years old in and around the state of Gobir.[32] Contacts between the jihadists in Kano and Usman dan Fodio were maintained by "personal visits and reading [his] works."[33] As shown by Mahadi, a significant number of Fulani travelled between Kano and Degel before the *jihad* was called. Thus, the ideology and aims of Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello were transmitted to Kano.[34] The causes of the *jihad* have been debated for almost half a century.[35] The religious impetus

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[31]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 5, John Ralph Willis, "Introduction: Reflections on the Diffusion of Islam in West Africa" in John Ralph Willis, (ed.), *Studies in West African Islamic History: the Cultivators of Islam* (London: Cass, 1979), 1-39, Nehemia Levtzion, "'Abd Allah b. Yasin and the Almoravids" in *Studies in West African Islamic History*, 78-112, Nehemia Levtzion, "Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa: An Introductory Essay" in *Asian and African Studies* 20 (1986), 7-26, R. G. Jenkins, "The Evolution of Religious Brotherhoods in North and Northwest Africa, 1523-1900" in *Studies in West African Islamic History*, 40-77, Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 15-57, 101-106, Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, 1-43; 44-58; 244-260, John Hunwick, "Arabic Language and Muslim Society in West Africa" in *Ghana Social Science Journal* 4, 2 (1977), Jack Goody, "The Impact of Islamic Writing on the Oral Cultures of West Africa" in *CEA* 11 (1971), 455-66, John Ralph Willis, "The Transmission of Islamic Learning in the Western Sudan" in Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy and Traditional Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), Peter Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), Daniel McCall and Norman Bennett (eds.), *Aspects of West African Islam* (Boston: Boston African Studies Center, 1971).

[32]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 6.

[33]Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 335.

[34]*Ibid.* See also Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari* (Zaria: NNPC, 1958), 47-50 and Mohammad b. Salih, *Taqyid-al-ahkbar*, translated by Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa (Kano: Tofa Press, 1989).

[35]There were a variety of economic, social, religious and political causes; for details, see Last, "Reform in West Africa," 7-10.

for reform, as well as economic and social conflict, were responsible for its initial spread and success. The political ideology and practice of the jihadists was constructed from a continual interpretation and reinterpretation of the proper "blueprint" for Islamic government and administration.[36] The political ideology of the Caliphate government was intimately tied to Islam. By c. 1810, the Caliphate government had evolved into a hierarchical system that was based on the delegation of powers to state officials. It was modelled on and justified by Abbasid precedents.[37] This process was marked by debate within the community over what was or was not Islamically justifiable. The jihadists hoped to ensure that the Muslim community in Hausaland would prosper and considered themselves part of the broader, unifying and universal Muslim community.[38] The area encompassed by the Caliphate was huge, and it required that political institutions be established and refined. The development of this Islamic state was brought to completion by Muhammad Bello, Usman dan Fodio's son, who became *amir al-mu'minin* after his father's death in 1817. The office-holding system was not as firmly established and rigidly demarcated as in the Ottoman Empire or the Abbasid Caliphate. Nonetheless, the development and use of official titles and

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[36]Watts, *Silent Violence*, 48, Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 232, Last, "Reform in West Africa," 24-25.

[37]Last, "Reform in West Africa," 24-25 and 24 Watts, 48-49, 57. See Usman dan Fodio, *Bayan Wujub al-hijra*, as cited by Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 147: "The first pillar [of a kingdom] is an upright wazir over the wilaya who wakens [the king] if he sleeps and gives him sight if he cannot see and reminds him if he is heedless. The greatest catastrophe which could befall the wilaya and its subjects is to be deprived of good wazirs and helpers. One of the requirements of the wazir is that he should be truly benevolent and kind-hearted towards the people."

[38]Paul M. Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labour in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 10-15.

institutions of governance was partially modelled on the precedents used and articulated by those governments, as well as those of the conquered Hausa states.

The Argument: Kano Political Tradition and the Evolution of Royal Slavery

The revival of royal slavery in Kano has generally been portrayed as a necessary "compromise" that undermined Islamic ideals and religious values.[39] Although it is true that the jihadists sought to overthrow what they regarded as the corrupt and un-Islamic political practices of the *Habe* rulers, they never aimed to create a state based on the simple model of the "four rightly guided" Caliphs; rather, they intended to create and use "officialdom" to protect and preserve Islam. Certainly, the realities of rulership meant that some of their more idealistic views of government, best exemplified in the works of Abdullahi dan Fodio, were cast aside. Nonetheless, the use of royal slaves was tied to the nature and type of government that Islamic political theory could encourage, as Carl Petry has emphasized: ". . . this type of regime should not be regarded as unique to any particular Muslim state, but rather as a characteristic of the Islamic political tradition as a whole."[40] The adoption of the institution of royal slavery was a

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[39]See, for example, Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 385, 394-397, 399-411. Mahadi notes that the jihadists used the Abbasid model, but argues such a model was in and of itself a deviation from Islam.

[40]Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 15.

common solution to a common set of problems faced by many, although not all, Islamic states. In this regard, local conditions and history, whether in Egypt, Morocco, Dar Fur, the Ottoman Empire or Kano, also played a vital role in shaping the use of royal slaves. Thus, the dynamic historical interaction between these two variables: Islamic ideology and particular, or "local," conditions and institutions, informed the adoption and adaptation of royal slavery as an institution in the Sokoto Caliphate.

Royal slavery in Kano was modelled upon the use of slave soldiers or *mamluks* common throughout the Islamic world. The adjective *mamluk* literally means "owned," and can be applied to both a person and an object or thing.[41] From the time of al-Mu'tasim,[42] the Abbasid Caliph between 833 and 842, the term was specifically applied to an owned person serving in a "military capacity."[43] It was applied to white men and boys[44] who were enslaved from the regions that bordered the *dar al-Islam* and who were then imported into Islamic states and used as soldiers. *Mamluk* was not applied to black--or African--soldiers, but

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[41]Nasser Rabbat, "The Evolution of the Concept of Mamluk after the founding of the Mamluk State in Egypt" (Unpublished Paper, *Conference on Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, Tokyo, October 10-11, 1998), 1. When used to describe a person it corresponds to the word *'abd*, or slave.

[42]Mamluks were used during the Umayyad period (715-750), but not as extensively or as systematically as they were during the Abbasid Caliphate. See Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*, 15.

[43]Rabbat, "The Evolution of the Concept of Mamluk," 1. See also David Ayalon, "Preliminary Remarks on the Mamluk Military Institution in Islam" in V. Parry and M. Yapp (eds.), *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 44-45, David Ayalon, "Mamluks of the Seljuks: Islam's Military Might at the Crossroads" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Series 3, 6, 3 (1996), 305-333, David Ayalon, "Mamlukiyyat" in David Ayalon (ed.), *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (London: Variorum, 1988), 321-339, but especially p. 324.

[44]They were generally taken from Central Asia, southern Europe, Russia, the Crimea and Caucasus, See Rabbat, "The Evolution of the Concept of Mamluk," 1.

came to be generally associated with "Turkish" or "Turkicized" boys.[45] Although in practice Africans were not actually called *mamluks* in the heart of the Islamic world, the term also refers to a very particular kind of service to the state: the enslavement, training and promotion of elite slave soldiers. They were used because of their loyalty to their master and patron, who in effect allowed them the opportunity to acquire influence and prestige despite their slave origins and/or status. However, these *mamluks* often used their positions and military strength to install their own puppets, or in some cases themselves, as rulers.

The word *mamluk* was not used in Kano and I therefore use it as a conceptual term. My use of the word is intended to convey the importance of the *mamluk*-style model to the historical development of the institution of royal slavery in Kano Emirate and the Sokoto Caliphate. Specifically, *mamluks* underwent a very particular process that can and should be broadly applied and examined. I argue that the process of enslavement, acculturation and training of slaves for service to the state occurred in the Sokoto Caliphate, specifically Kano, in ways that were strikingly similar to the Islamic Middle East.[46] Royal slaves in Kano were indeed part of the broader history of elite slavery in the Islamic world, and should be examined in that context as well as in the more specific context of the Sokoto Caliphate and Kano

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[45]Rabbat, "The Evolution of the Concept of Mamluk," 1. See also David Ayalon, "Aspects of the Mamluk Phenomenon" in *Der Islam* 53, 2 (1976), 196-225, David Ayalon, "On the Eunuchs in Islam" in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979), 67-124 and Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 15.

[46]See David Ayalon, "L' esclavage du Mamelouk" in *Oriental Notes and Studies* 1 (1951), 1-66, Hassanein Rabie, "The Training of the Mamluk Faris" in Parry and Yapp (eds.), *War, Technology and Society*, 153-163.

Emirate. Slaves were captured and brought to the Kano palace, where they were incorporated into slave households for training and acculturation. They were employed as the elite cavalry and musketeer corps because as slaves they were more dependent on the ruler, who could therefore control them more completely than he could the free-born.[47] There were important differences and variations related to cultural and historical circumstances of course. However, the historical differences *and* similarities between the use of royal slaves in the Islamic world provide broader thematic insights about the nature and history of royal slavery as an institution.

> Such slaves owed their status and power entirely to the ruler or dominant oligarchy responsible for their purchase. Highly impressionable adolescents, selected for their quick wit and physical prowess, would be trained not only to excel in the martial arts but also to bestow their undivided loyalty upon their benefactors. By such a strategy the rulers sought to secure their control over populations whose allegiance was often doubtful.[48]

The process described above occurred among slaves whose functions were not primarily military in character; thus, the *mamluk*-style process of enslavement and acculturation applied to both administrative and military slaves. Although the literature has generally argued that *mamluks* were emancipated before taking a commission, it now appears this was not always the case. Over time, however, *mamluks* in many parts of the Middle East were freed as a matter of course, and

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[47]This point is stressed throughout the literature; see, for example: Ayalon, "Mamlukiyyat," 326-327 and Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*, 15-19.

[48]Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 16. See also Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians: The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 72-101.

thenceforward were expected to recruit their own slaves to repeat the process.[49] In Kano, royal slaves remained slaves throughout their careers, and unlike the *Mamluks* of Egypt, they never took direct control of the state.

I do not intend to completely abstract the term *mamluk* from its historical and cultural context. As Nassar Rabbat has shown, the meanings of the word changed over time, and no doubt, also depended on the social position of the person using the word.[50] As I have emphasized, the process of becoming *mamluk*, and the use of slaves in government, had cultural and social characteristics which shared common features across specific times and places. Overall, the use of royal slaves in Kano was a response to the problems of rulership and political legitimacy which occurred throughout the Islamic world. As an institution, royal slavery exhibited similar characteristics in states where it was used extensively. These characteristics were vital elements in determining how royal slave systems functioned. First, the relationship between ruler and royal slave was the primary pillar upon which the system operated. This relationship was based on personal ties between slave and master. Slave power was initially a result of royal slaves' favoured access and proximity to the ruler. The use of royal slaves in this manner generally encouraged the

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[49]See David Ayalon, "L' esclavage du Mamelouk," 66 and Rabbat, "The Evolution of the Concept of Mamluk," 4-5. On training and succession, See Nassar O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 133-134. This remains open to question, however, and varied according to time and place.

[50]On historical change, see for example: Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 152-153.

centralization of power in the hands of the ruler, with slaves being used to control independent constellations of power inside of the court.[51] Secondly, the systematic creation and acquisition of knowledge was a vital component of royal slavery. The mastery of certain bodies of knowledge was an important element in determining an individual slave's chances for promotion and advancement. The production, acquisition and transmission of knowledge was central to the political and social organization of the state; furthermore, it was central to the way in which the royal slave community defined itself and the manner in which it operated. Thirdly, royal slaves tended to control land from which they derived economic rewards. This served as a means to control and centralize taxation and agricultural production, which were vital to the economic success of the state.[52] Fourthly, royal slaves were mobilized in slave household units, located spatially, politically, and culturally inside of the ruler's own larger household unit. These households were centres of royal slave patronage and social life, and served as the political and social spaces in which royal slavery reproduced itself.[53] The distribution of political

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[51]See, for example: Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol I.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Inquiry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[52]See Robin Law, "Slaves, Trade, and Taxes: The Material Basis of Political Power in Precolonial West Africa" in *Research in Economic Anthropology* vol 1 (1978), 37-52. See also Halil Inalcik with Donald Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Tarifed Khalidi (ed.), *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beruit, 1984) and Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). In 1528, for example, 87 per cent of land was legally in the domain of the Ottoman state. See McGowan, 49, citing H. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600* (New York, 1973), 110.

[53]Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

patronage was the means that royal slaves used to "recruit" clients and followers, who in turn increased their patron's position and influence. It was by mobilizing and controlling people that both the free and slave elite maintained their hold on political power; it was also the central means through which power was exercised. The ability to dispense, and benefit from, political patronage gave royal slaves the opportunity to develop large households composed of both kin and clients:

> In a political system in which the institutional organization-especially at the centre-is weak, or has been decisively weakened, informal aspects of patron-client relationships or loyalty among the members of specific groups play an important role in the maintenance and stabilization of the political system.[54]

Royal slaves participated in the creation of their own history and political culture in the context of this broader history of the Islamic state and statecraft in Hausaland. Royal slaves did not of course have absolute control over the creation and definition of their world. The culture of royal slavery was instead a product of a continual series of personal, economic and social interactions between "slave and master."[55] In particular, royal slave households were the arenas in which royal slave communities challenged and contested the meaning and definition of their status as slaves. This process was expressed primarily in the language of kinship and was a reflection of the attempt

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[54]Thomas Philipp, "Personal Loyalty and Political Power of the Mamluks in the Eighteenth Century" in Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann,(eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 118.

[55]For an introduction to the problems associated with the development of a "slave consciousness" see Jonathon Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes: The Contradictory Consciousness of Slave Resistance on the Swahili Coast" in *Journal of African History* 32 (1991), 279 and Jonathon Glassman, "No Words of their Own" in *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 16, No. 1 (1995), 131-145.

by royal slaves to create kinship structures of their own; indeed, the tension between slavery and kinship was common in royal slave systems throughout the Islamic world.[56] In theory, the Kano *mamluks* were isolated from kinship networks, making them much less of a threat to their master. In practice, the Kano *mamluks* established networks of patronage, clientage and family life. Over time, individual slave households came to dominate certain titles, offices and military commands. This apparent contradiction is fundamental to understanding how the *mamluk* system operated in Kano.

Martin Klein has suggested that recent definitions of slavery can be divided into three main categories: those that emphasize the slave's "kinlessness," those that stress the status of slaves as property, and finally, those that emphasize the importance of the power relationship between master and slave, and the continuing and constant need for coercion to reinforce the slave's status as a slave.[57] In general, the scholarship on elite slavery has been divided between those who argue that royal slaves were not "slaves" as such, and those who have tried

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[56]See, for example: Donald S. Richards, "Mamluk Amirs and their Families and Households" in Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann,(eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 32-54, Ulrich Haarman, "Joseph's Law-the careers and activities of Mamluk descendants before the Ottoman conquest of Egypt" in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, 55-84, Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). For a useful although flawed introduction to Ottoman households and family life, see Alan Duben, "Turkish Families and Households in Historical Perspective" in *Journal of Family History* Spring (1975), 75-97.

[57]Martin Klein, "Introduction: Modern European Expansion and Traditional Servitude in Africa and Asia" in Martin Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emanicipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 4-5. Ehud Toledano has also discussed this typology, see "The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies: Dichotomy or Continuum" (Unpublished Paper, *Conference on Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, Tokyo, October 10-11, 1998), 4-5.

to establish and define their slave status. Among the latter, some have attempted to reaffirm the slave status of royal slaves by emphasizing their isolation and kinlessness,[58] the fact that they were subject to the control and caprices of the ruler,[59] or by claiming they were generally "dishonoured" beings.[60] For example, Orlando Patterson defines slave status as "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonoured persons."[61] He argues that this definition should apply to all slaves, regardless of their status, in all time periods. Elite slaves were persons who had power but no honour, and this explains why and how they were used in the military and government. Likewise, Claude Meillassoux has argued that royal slaves were used because they were socially isolated:

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[58]See for example: Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and James L. Watson, "Introduction: Slavery as an Institution: Open and Closed Systems" in James L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

[59]Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 15-23. Thus Pipes argues that a military slave remained a "true slave" only as long as his master could and did control him. Of course, the degree of "control" is always variable. The simple fact that a slave could escape or alter the scope of certain restrictions did not automatically make him free. See also Allan R. Meyers, "Class, Ethnicity, and Slavery: The Origins of the Moroccan 'Abid" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* X, 3 (1977), 439-440. "In economic terms, M. Isma'il was assured of the soldiers devotion because they had no alternatives to the subsidies and largesse they received from the state. As slaves . . . they were landless, and without tribal affiliations they lacked even the usufruct rights in tribal lands and herds." For another example, see Douglas H. Johnson, "Sudanese Military Slavery from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century" in Léone Archer (ed.), *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour* (London: Routledge, 1988).

[60]See, for example Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge: Harvard Univesity Press, 1982).

[61]Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 13.

> [the]deprivations which excluded slaves from civil society were also at the origin of their progress in the circles of power . . . the slave owed what he was to his master . . . only his master could grant him the attributes of a person, albeit fictious and precarious. The slave owed his master everything, including his loyalty . . . since the slave was naturally excluded from inheritance and from succession within the master's lineage, he had no possible claim to possessions or titles. He was thus not involved in rivalries between collaterals or other pretenders to power occasioned by kinship.[62]

According to Meillassoux, royal slaves were "neutral," subjugated beings, who were brought into the circles of the power because, as slaves, they could make no legitimate claims to possess power, authority or status *independently*; they were dependent on their master for protection and for access to their positions. Thus, in theory slaves were natally alienated and socially isolated. This condition was fundamental to the very process that made people into slaves. Enslavement transformed individuals into permanent "outsiders." They had no kin or family to provide them with economic and political support, making them the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. This dynamic was certainly central to the institution of royal slavery in Kano; but it fails to address the motives, abilities and role of the individuals who actually held slave offices. It neglects the historical process that occurred "on the ground" in elite slave communities. Despite the absence of kin, which explains the *initial* reason for their use, royal slaves created family networks and played the politics of kinship in the palace as a means to contest the terms of their subjugation. This process took two main forms. First, royal slaves

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[62]See Meillassoux: *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 138-139.

were attached to the royal household through concubinage and child-rearing practices. Royal slaves operated as "members" of the ruling household. Through the metaphor of the "household" royal slaves were partially transformed from "outsiders" to "members." However, this transformation was always incomplete. Secondly, royal slave households became centres of slave social and cultural activity. Royal slaves acquired families and clients, and attempted to pass titles, power and knowledge on to their progeny and associates. They could thus make claims to belong to a broader corporate group. They had established themselves as "honoured" individuals. In the following Chapters the historical development of royal slavery as an institution will be examined by focusing on the ways in which royal slaves manipulated "kinship" to forge a palace slave community and culture, how the formation of these slave families and households impacted on the history of nineteenth century Kano (including the nature of the social order) and how the creation of these kinship networks reflects the central contradiction between the theoretical status of slaves as "kinless" and the actual practice of royal slavery.

Indeed, many royal slaves were highly honoured personages regardless of their slave status. In Kano "honour" and "slavery" were not always mutually exclusive. Slaves exercised power on behalf of the emir, but they also came to exercise power on their own behalf as well. The heads of royal slave households were most certainly "honoured" by the slave community and by free title-holders because, as individuals, some were known to be knowledgeable, influential and

capable; they had the ear of the emir and as a result could sometimes act with impunity. Although in theory they exercised power for the emir, individual royal slaves had their own political goals which they pursued with considerable political acumen. Likewise, royal slaves attempted to develop (in Patterson's terminology) a system of "honour" which was grounded in networks of kinship and clientage and thus lay outside of the formal system of titles and offices. In so doing, royal slaves loosened the bond that tied them to the emir and that made them into slaves. In short, royal slaves used the material, political and cultural resources attached to their offices to alter the more restrictive practices of slavery.

Despite these efforts, royal slaves were still perceived and treated as slaves in Hausa and Fulani society. Slave status was deployed specifically to make slaves un-equal and dependent. It was this process that made slaves so valuable as officials and soldiers. They were then unconstrained by the obligations and norms that confined free officialdom. They were ultimately responsible to no person other than the emir. In this regard, royal slaves were subject to the power of another - the emir - in a manner that was particularly related to their status as slaves. Individual slaves were "honoured" as other successful officials would be, but their status as "honoured" persons was more fragile and subject to the vagaries of political life because their main source of social esteem was located in their offices, positions and responsibilities (which were dramatically determined by individual ability, personality and relationship with the emir.) In the

case of the Kano *mamluks*, royal slaves were also the property of the ruler. The emir could transfer palace slaves to farms outside the palace, depose them, seize their possessions as well as execute them. "Royal slaves" were a particular and definable category of slaves. Thus, royal slave status in Kano incorporated elements of theoretical "kinlessness" and social isolation, status as property, and the need for psychological and physical domination and coercion. In each case, however, royal slaves attempted to redefine and alter the social, psychological and economic conditions dictated by their status as slaves. The Kano royal slave system was defined by the variable power relationship between master and slave.[63] Slavery was a "social relationship." It was constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated, as slaves resisted and contested the control of their masters over their lives and bodies.[64]

Overall, this dissertation traces the historical development of royal slavery in the context of Islam and Islamic government, as articulated by the jihadists, and the nature and structure of the "Hausa" state system. I focus on the history of three senior royal slave titles: the *shamaki*, *dan rimi* and *sallama* in order to examine how they functioned and what royal slave status meant in practice. The growth of the institution is charted from the initial revival of the system during the reign of Ibrahim Dabo (1819-1846) to the gradual development of the

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[63]For example, see Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 159-164. But, for a critical view, see Jay Spaulding, "Slavery, Land Tenure and Social Class in the Northern Turkish Sudan" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15/1 (1982), 1-20.

[64]See Dean A. Miller, "Some Psycho-Social Perceptions of Slavery" in *Journal of Social History* 18/4 (1985), 587-605 and Richard Harvey Brown, "Cultural Representation and Ideological Domination" in *Social Forces* 71/3 (1993), 657-676.

royal slave community over the nineteenth century. Initially, Ibrahim Dabo relied on a few individual slaves drawn from the pre-*jihad* bureaucracy or his own household. These individuals founded households and families that later developed into a royal slave community. The community began to flourish during the reign of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi (1855-1882), as expressed in creation of royal slave households, a formal system of household recruitment, training and promotion, and a very particular interpretation of the concept of *amana* that resulted in the formation of close ties between certain emirs and slaves. These developments eventually led to the civil war of 1893 and the ultimate concentration of power in the hands of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi's lineage represented by Emir Aliyu's (1894-1903) accession to the throne.

The Historiography and Sources

The history of royal slaves and slavery in Kano Emirate and the Sokoto Caliphate has been documented by a number of other scholars. In his examination of the political institutions and history of Kano Emirate, M.G. Smith demonstrates the importance of royal slaves in the conduct of government and administration. He provides a number of vital historical details based on oral tradition which have been extremely valuable to my own work. However, Smith tends to argue that slaves were bound so completely by ties of loyalty and trust to their masters that they had little room for creative, individual

endeavour.[65] Likewise, Adamu Fika has discussed royal slavery in relation to the Kano Civil War.[66] Fika does not, however, explore the history of the institution before the reign of Muhammad Bello in any depth. In her work on the history and geography of Kano palace, Heidi J. Nast has documented the changes in the physical structure of the palace which she relates to social and political change in Kano. Her work on women has been especially valuable, given the fact that as a male I had little opportunity to conduct interviews myself with palace women.[67] However, as will become evident in later chapters, I argue that her focus on the creation of "gendered space" obscures the importance of government by and through the royal household; in Kano, "private" space was political space. Royal slaves had access to the family and household of the ruler. To impose a sharp division between private or female space and political or male space fails to address the social and political networks royal slaves formed with one another and with the free aristocracy that reached into the emir's household. In short, politics was a family affair. Royal slaves were attached to the emir's household by forms of quasi-kinship and clientage. As will become clear, others, notably C.N. Ubah, Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, Halil Ibrahim Sa'id, Yusufu Yunusa, Paul E. Lovejoy,

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[65]M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano, 1350-1950*, M.G. Smith, *Affairs of Daura* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau.*

[66]Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 1880-1940.*

[67]See especially: Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power: Stories of Spatial and Social Change in the Palace of Kano, Northern Nigeria, Circa 1500-1990 (Ph.D., unpublished, McGill University, 1993) and Heidi J. Nast, "Engendering 'Space': State Formation and the Restructuring of Northern Nigeria's Kano Palace, 1807-1903" in *Historical Geography* Vol. 23, Nos. 1 and 2 (1993), 62-75.

Beverly Mack and Abdullahi Mahadi have explored aspects of royal slavery and Kano history that helped break the ground for this study.[68]

This dissertation expands upon previous scholarship to provide a comprehensive history of royal slavery in Kano in the nineteenth century. The oral data from and about royal slave families that I and others have collected provides the empirical background for the study. I conducted four field visits to Nigeria between 1995 and 1998. I was given permission to conduct interviews in the palace by the Emirate Council, with the approval of *Sarkin Kano* Alhaji Ado Bayero. Most of the interviews were taped, although some were not if an informant so requested. I worked with a number of research assistants, who helped with transcription, translation and participated in the interviews as well. I have used other collections of interviews, most especially a series of interviews conducted by Yusufu Yunusa during 1975-1976, under the supervision of Paul E. Lovejoy. These interviews have helped to further authenticate my own oral data, as they provided an opportunity for me to cross-check my findings with information

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[68]C.N. Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate* (Nsukka, 1985), Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki, 1865-1917: A Neglected Personage in the Political History of Kano" (M.A., unpublished, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, 1991), Halil Ibrahim Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction: The Fulani Jihad in Kano and its Aftermath, 1807-1919" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Michigan, 1978), Yusufu Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano" (B.A. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1976), Paul E. Lovejoy, Abdullahi Mahadi and Mansur Ibrahim Muhktar (eds.), "C.L. Temple's 'Notes on the History of Kano' [1909]: A Lost Chronicle of Political Office" in *Sudanic Africa* iv (1993), Beverly B. Mack, "Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Hausaland" in *Slavery and Abolition* 9 (1988), 89-110, Beverly B. Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano" in Catherine M. Coles and Beverly B. Mack (eds.), *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Beverly B. Mack, "Service and Status: Slaves and Concubines in Kano, Nigeria" in Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen (eds.), *At Work in Homes* (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1990), Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy: The Sarauta System and its Roles in Shaping the Society and Economy of Kano with Particular Reference to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

obtained from different sources twenty years earlier. My major informants included the current *dan rimi*, Abdulkadir Kwaru, who was born in the palace and is the son of *Dan Rimi* Allah Bar Sarki; Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, the son of *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru; *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, the grandson of *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, who I had the opportunity to interview near the end of my research in March, 1998; *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, whom I interviewed only once, but whose perspective as a free official was important; and, *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, another palace official who currently works with the Emirate Council in Kano.[69] The oral data are supplemented by archival data from the colonial period, material written by the leaders of the *jihad*, and a number of local histories and sources, the most important being *The Kano Chronicle.*

This oral data offered an opportunity to examine the everyday experiences, lives and histories of the royal slaves who held the three senior slave offices between 1807 and 1903. As much as possible, I have reconstructed the history of the institution through the voices, ideas and thoughts of nineteenth century royal slaves in order to show how they created and defined their world. It is then possible to explore the political and social culture of royal slavery created by these individuals over the course of the nineteenth-century. Royal slaves were important historical actors in their own right during this period, yet their voices and history have largely been examined only in relation to the history of the free-born elite. They seldom appear in the

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[69]Furthermore, I have tried to establish an ongoing relationship with my informants. It was extremely helpful to have returned to Kano three times after my initial visit.

written record, yet made obvious and important contributions to the unfolding of Kano's history during this period The "interior architecture"[70] of royal slavery can thus be captured by looking at the ways royal slaves lived their lives: from daily routine to once-in-a-lifetime palace drama. These experiences tell us a lot about the advantages royal slaves had as well as the constraints they operated under. Likewise, the "voices" of royal slaves are indirectly present in the descriptions of palace ritual, ceremonies and daily life - the "concrete practices"[71] of royal slaves - that have been documented and described by colonial officials, European travellers and contemporary indigenous historians such as Imam Imoru. Even in the most mundane of colonial documents it is possible to find evidence of African agency and ideologies. In particular, as the custodians of Kano history and tradition, royal slaves played an important role in shaping British attitudes about the history of the palace and the local political situation. Indeed, colonial officials often relied on Africans to provide them with vital information about Kano.

This study is divided into five chapters. Each chapter explores one facet of the royal slave system in Kano. As discussed above, I argue that the Kano *mamluks* were used for reasons that paralleled those in the broader Islamic world, of which the Sokoto Caliphate was a part. Likewise, the system in Kano operated in ways very similar to a

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[70]David William Cohen, "Doing Social History from Pim's Doorway" in Oliver Zunz (ed.), *Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1985), 195.
[71]Henrietta L. Moore and Megan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Chnage in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1994), xxiii.

broader Islamic pattern, especially in regard to the importance of households, kinship and the control of knowledge in defining and shaping the cultural, social and political nature of the system. Yet, I also emphasize that it is vital not to "essentialize" either the institution of elite slavery or Islam; rather, I examine Islam as one important factor among others that shaped the Sokoto Caliphate and its administration. Unlike Daniel Pipes and Patricia Crone, I examine patterns of historical change *and* continuity. In Kano, royal slavery increasingly became a hereditary institution, as opposed to the classically one-generational *mamluk* archetype.[72]

The first chapter, "Islamic Government and Royal Slavery: The Sokoto Caliphate and Islamic Tradition," examines the interaction between institutions, ideas, events and people over the course of the nineteenth century in order to understand how and why royal slavery was adopted in Kano and the Caliphate. I argue that the nineteenth century royal slave system was informed by the structure of pre-jihadist Kano and the theories and practice of jihadist government. They were, however, used for the same general purposes in both Islamic and non-Islamic states: the centralization and elaboration of state power in the context of fluid state structures organized around political/social patronage networks and elaborate household units. Royal slavery was a common and wide-spread response to problems of political legitimacy and factionalism. Overall, this chapter argues that

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[72]Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* and Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). See also Chapter One and Chapter Three.

the adoption of the institution of royal slavery was integral to the elaboration of the Islamic state in Hausaland. Royal slaves allowed the political elite to control the reins of secular and sacred authority. The Chapter also explores the *jihadist* literature of Usman dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello in order to provide an intellectual context for the development of royal slavery in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Two, "The Paths to Power: Royal Slave Titles Under Dabo and his Successors in Kano Emirate," examines royal slavery and concepts about "office-holding" in the specific context of individual royal slave officials in Kano. Specifically, the chapter examines the names, functions, origins and positions of slave offices, as well as the lives and biographies of important royal slaves. This examination is then used to document the history and chronology of the formal introduction and evolution of royal slave titles, title-holders, and the institution of royal slavery in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By exploring the careers of royal slaves, and the oral traditions associated with certain individuals, I can better understand royal slave political ideology. The occupants of the offices are documented by using a combination of oral and archival data. After the institution was established by Ibrahim Dabo, royal slaves were regularly deposed when new emirs came to the throne. It was exceedingly rare for an individual slave official to outlast the reign of a single emir. I argue that slave status was extremely important in determining royal slave identity and the manner in which they were subjugated. Their bodies, clothing, names and legal position all

reinforced their position as slaves, and the precarious position they held in the political hierarchy. Political life was located and conducted through networks of personal and kin relationships. The household of the ruler lay at the centre of this system: the emir dispensed patronage and appointments to all of Kano officialdom. Thus, the patterns of office-holding documented by the history of individual slave officials indicate that promotion was closely tied to an individual slave's relationship with the emir, which was *the* pivotal element in establishing a successful career.

Chapter Three, entitled, "Kinship, Households and Royal Slave Families in the Kano Palace" explores the development of the royal slave "community" in the palace. It investigates the nature of royal slave "consciousness" as expressed in the cultural and social world of slave officialdom. I argue that despite the fact that they were by definition "kinless," royal slaves developed networks of kin and clients as a means to ensure that their power as a community was not fragmented. The creation of royal slave "kinship" ties also highlights the dual status of royal slaves. They were slaves and power brokers as well as "insiders" and "outsiders." Royal slaves became powerful *because* of their servile status but tried to secure and expand their power through networks of kinship and concubinage. I trace the evolution of these slave families and their interconnections with one another and with the royal household via the institution of concubinage. The royal slave palace community was itself organized into households which had patrimonial and personal ties with the

Emir, and these ties are examined. Thus, this chapter examines the evolution and institutionalization of a royal slave community in Kano Emirate between the end of Ibrahim Dabo's reign and the conquest of Kano by the British in 1903.

Chapter Four, "Learning, Knowledge and Political Power in the Royal Slave Community" argues that the invention, acquisition and transmission of knowledge were central components of the social and political construction of royal slavery. Slaves were recruited to perform specific tasks, many of which required considerable skill and ability to master. Royal slaves were systematically trained in order to ensure that the emir had access to a variety of skills. Royal slaves acquired knowledge by becoming members of social and political networks connecting individuals and households. In so doing, they were able to acquire and transmit knowledge to their progeny and clients. In particular, royal slaves controlled the movement of knowledge by virtue of their positions as the "gates" for information coming into the palace. Likewise, representatives from their own households travelled to rural areas outside Kano, where they supervised the collection of taxes and gathered information about the regions under their supervision. This knowledge was transmitted back to slave officials in Kano. The royal slave community also had access to knowledge about guns and gun-making, which I trace historically and use as an example of "slave knowledge." Certain members of the community acquired skills related to the repair, manufacture and deployment of muskets, and the slave regiments of musketeers were

an important military resource for Emir Aliyu Babba (1894-1903). Thus, I argue that royal slavery was an effective means for the emir to acquire and mobilize knowledge. However, knowledge was also deployed as an instrument of domination and subordination. While it offered slaves a means to accumulate "cultural capital," and thus avenues to power, it also secured their subordination by labelling them *slaves*.

Chapter Five, "The Sultan and His Slaves: '*Amana*' and the Crisis of Legitimacy in the Late Nineteenth Century," explores the concepts of reciprocal trust (*amana*) and secrets (*asiri*) in the relationship between royal slaves and the emir. A consistent pattern in the nineteenth century was for new emirs to promote favoured personal slaves into formal positions of authority once they came to the throne. The institution was grounded in the notion that royal slaves could have access to household secrets because they had a special trust placed in them by the emir -*amana* - to which they would always remain faithful. While it is obviously not the case that royal slaves always remained loyal to the emir, the notion of *amana* had a powerful impact on the institution nonetheless. However, I also argue that *amana* was highly personalized. Slaves developed relationships with individual emirs, not always the overall institution. The history of the Kano Civil War demonstrates how *amana* operated. The division between Tukur and Yusuf during the Civil War can be partially explained by the loyalties they cultivated among their personal, highly favoured slaves. Likewise, by the end of the nineteenth century, the scale of royal

slavery had expanded to such an extent that it was vitally important for both Yusufu and Tukur to curry favour with the royal slave community, who controlled vitally important military units, and possessed military and administrative expertise. The royal slave community was itself politicized by the conflict, and entire households divided, or looked for ways to preserve their positions, between 1893 and 1895.

Chapter One

Islamic Government and Royal Slavery: The Sokoto Caliphate and Islamic Tradition

One Obedient slave is better
than three hundred sons
for the latter desire their father's death,
the former his master's glory.[1]

Introduction

The institution of royal slavery has occupied a prominent place in the political life and history of the Islamic world. It played a central role in the governance of a wide variety of Islamic states, yet the institution was itself universally absent from Islamic religious discourse.[2] Although geographically Kano was on the periphery of *dar al-Islam*, its government shared common organizational and ideological features with other Islamic states; Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate were indeed part of a broader Islamic world. Hausaland in general was linked to North Africa and the Middle East via religious networks (especially the pilgrimage) and trade. The external, trans-Saharan slave trade itself encouraged the development of royal slave institutions, as Islamic attitudes and prescriptions about slavery and

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[1]Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnameh*, quoted by Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System.*

[2]Slavery is of course recognized in the Qur'an, but focuses on the proper treatment and manumission of slaves. Pronouncements on the use of slaves in government and the military are absent. In general, see John Hunwick, "Slavery in Islamic Law" in Seymour Drescher and Stanley Engerman, (eds.),*A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), R. Brunschvig, " 'Abd" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 24-40 and Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

the methods of enslavement were adopted throughout the northern savanna, sahel and southern Sahara through Muslim merchants involved in the trade.[3] In conjunction with the spread of Islam, a Sudanic style[4] government evolved which relied extensively on slave officials. It existed in such states as Songhay, Kanem-Borno, Mali, Ghana, Sinnar, Dar Fur, and the Sokoto Caliphate.[5]

From an early date the spread of Islam encouraged the transformation and adaptation of African state systems to incorporate Islamic conceptions about the structure of government and methods of governance. Islam also brought a firmer and formal division between "slave and free" than was common in kin-based societies. This development encouraged and intensified the use of slaves in production and administration.[6] Although the ruling elite of many savanna states became Muslim, their subjects often remained largely unconverted. Because the conversion of "pagans" was a central way in which Islam justified and legitimated slavery, it became legally and morally possible to rationalize enslavement through war or state-sponsored raiding expeditions. The use of royal slaves in the local West African context originated and evolved as a result of these state-sanctioned slave raids, and served as a means to "employ" the

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[3]Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 24; 28-29. According to Nehemia Levtzion, royal slaves were used in Mali in the thirteenth century. See *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen, 1973), 65; 112-113, as cited by Lovejoy, *ibid.* and R.S. O'Fahey, *Kingdoms of the Sudan* (London: Methuen, 1974).

[4]See Joseph P. Smaldone, *Historical and Sociological Aspects of Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 5-8.

[5]See Allan G.B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa* (London: C. Hurst, 1970).

[6]*Ibid.*, 18.

otherwise "unemployable." In turn, the use of royal slaves underpinned the increasing importance of slave labour which occurred in the region from the sixteenth century onward. Slave soldiers and administrators were the means by which the rulers of these states maintained and controlled their supply of slaves.

In Islamic states, the ruler as "caliph" or "emir" exercised power as part of a religious mandate.[7] Certainly, the demands of rulership meant that some Islamic political ideals were cast aside because they proved unworkable, but by and large Islamic governments justified and legitimated themselves in Islamic terms according to Islamic law.[8] Nevertheless, Islam generated intensive debate over the proper and legitimate role of the state in society: "Muslim politics, like politics everywhere . . . involves a contest over the extent of state control-locating boundaries of legitimate state and nonstate activity."[9] The use of royal slaves was tied to this competition for authority, and

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[7]For a discussion of the role and position of the Caliph in Islamic theory, specifically in the Sokoto Caliphate, see Ibraheem Sulaiman, *The Islamic State and the Challenge of History: Ideals, Policies and Operation of the Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Mansell, 1987). In general, See Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), Tamara Sonn, *Between the Qur'an and Crown: The Challenge of Political Legitimacy in the Arab World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), Alexander S. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.), *Islam and Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) and James P. Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[8]For example, during the Middle Abbasid Period, Caliph Al-Ma'mun (813-832) and his successors assumed both the title of *imam* to solidify their claims to religious leadership as well as *amir al-mu'minin* which embodied their claims to secular power. Al-Ma'mum also adopted Mu'tazilism, which was concerned with "how much the Caliph could expand on Revelation to accommodate the changing needs of the community." Mu'tazilism proclaimed that the Qur'an was created in time, and could thus be modified by a "God-guided *imam*." According to Hugh Kennedy, Mu'tazilism "was a position which could hope to attract support from most shades of the theological and political spectrum and enhance the power of the caliph by giving his word Theocratic force." See Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986), 163.

[9]Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 20.

occurred as part of an "intricate and intersecting relationship between religion and politics" in the Islamic world.[10]

Islamic states needed to create practical and workable governments that also operated within the boundaries of Islamic Law. In order for Islam to survive, an alternative had to be found to the uncomplicated state structures of the early Islamic governments of the four rightly-guided Caliphs. The general process was not confined to Islamic states, as royal slaves were used in a variety of political systems. They were, however, used for the same general purposes in both Islamic and non-Islamic states: the centralization and elaboration of state power in the context of fluid state structures organized around political/social patronage networks and elaborate household units. It was a common and widespread response to problems of political legitimacy and factionalism.

Although the use of slave soldiers and officials was part of Muslim political theory as it evolved after the era of the four rightly-guided Caliphs, the institution of royal slavery was not an inevitable outgrowth of all Islamic state systems. Across the Sudanic belt, for example, both pre and post jihadist states faced problems of legitimacy and authority. These problems were resolved in a variety of ways, and did not always include the use of royal slaves.[11] In isolation, Islam cannot be deployed as an analytical tool to explain the diverse

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[10]*Ibid.*, 57.

[11]See Lidwien Kapteijns, *Mahdist Faith and Sudanic Tradition. The History of the Masalit Sultanate* (London: Routledge, 1985), R.S. O'Fahey, *State and Society in Dar Fur* (London: Hurst, 1980), R.S. O'Fahey and J.L. Spaulding, *Kingdoms of the Sudan.* In general, see Nazib Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991), 1-48.

histories, cultures and societies of the Muslim world. Rather, as Frederick Cooper has emphasized in relation to plantation slavery, it is vital to examine the process that led to a reliance on slaves, rather than simply analyzing the "the determining role of institutions, attitudes and markets."[12] Islam was but one, albeit important, variable that shaped the use of royal slaves in Africa and the Islamic Middle East. The interaction between institutions, ideas, events and people should be examined over time as part of the historical process. What led to the adoption of the institution in parts of the Islamic world? How did religion inform and determine the adoption of a royal slave system? How did politics and political ideology interact with Islam in this regard? Islam was not a constant, unchanging force, but played different political and social roles in different times and places. As indicated in the introduction, local political practice, culture and beliefs affected the way Islam was interpreted and applied in Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate. The use of royal slaves was related to both the government that Islam as a religion *could* generate and to local historical circumstances "on the ground."

The adoption of the institution of royal slavery was integral to the elaboration of the Islamic state in Hausaland. The use of royal slaves in Kano followed a similar pattern found in many Islamic states; it was a local adaptation of a royal slave complex exemplified most especially by the Ottoman Empire and Mamluk Egypt. The use of royal slaves was one means by which the political elite could dominate secular and

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[12]Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 13.

sacred authority; they allowed and encouraged the centralization of authority in the hands of individual dynasts. They also secured the state from external threat and internal subversion. Thus, royal slavery was partially an outgrowth of the nature of the Islamic state in Hausaland. Royal slaves were used because there was a political imperative to do so. The administrative system that evolved as part of this process was justified and legitimized by Islam. In practice, the concentration of power in the hands of the ruler, both permitted and encouraged by royal slaves, came at the expense of free officialdom.

This nineteenth-century "Islamic" tradition must also be placed in the local historical context. There was a long history of royal slavery and Islamisation in Kano prior to the jihadist conquest of 1807. This legacy was consciously drawn upon by the jihadist leaders to solidify their rule. While politics operated within the general framework set by Islam, royal slave political and social culture in the palace was located on the fringes of religion. Certainly, individuals were given Muslim names and taught Islamic rituals, but, as a group, they were less concerned with establishing an Islamic state and more focused on increasing their own positions and power. Royal slaves were used by the state, yet they also used the state for their own ends and needs. Thus, the use of royal slaves also generated specific internal political and social dynamics of its own, related to how they were used, their organization and the personalities of individual royal slaves. There is no better example of this dynamic than royal slave seizures of power

which occurred in a wide variety of royal slave systems.[13] This chapter argues that in Kano the use of royal slaves in the nineteenth century was informed by the jihadists' own theories and practice of government, by the structure of the pre-jihad, Hausa administration, and by the acts and thoughts of the royal slaves themselves. The following pages explore the interaction between Islam, the "local" power structure and the role of individual royal slaves in the revivial of royal slavery under the reign of Ibrahim Dabo (1819-1846).

Islam and Royal Slavery

The use of royal slaves has generally been described as a singularly Islamic phenomena.[14] Recent literature has primarily focused on defining and describing the unique characteristics of Islam which encouraged or necessitated the use of royal slaves in Islamic state systems. Patricia Crone, for example, argues that royal slavery was caused by the debilitating effect that the intrinsic moral deficiencies of Islam had on Islamic politics, political life and state structures.

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[13]The most famous example is Mamluk Egypt. For an introduction, see the articles collected in: David Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt, 1250-1517* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977) and David Ayalon, *The Mamluk Military Society* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979). See also David Ayalon, *L'esclavage du Mamelouk* (Jerusalem, 1951).

[14]See John Edward Philips, "Some Recent Thinking on Slavery in Islamic Africa and the Middle East" in *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* Vol. 27, No. 2 (December 1997), 157-162 and John Edward Philips, "Military and Administrative Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1804-1903," (unpublished conference paper, Workshop on "The African Diaspora and the 'Nigerian' Hinterland: Towards a Research Agenda," York University, Toronto, February 1996), 2.

> . . . incapable itself of conferring a positive legitimacy on the government of civilised society, Islam had at the same time destroyed the legitimatory resources of the traditions it had conquered . . . of necessity [they had] to perpetuate the machinery of imperial government in the lands they had subjugated, but they could not legitimate it in terms of their own religious values, still less reshape those values to suit its needs.[15]

The central problem was that Islam had no legitimizing political traditions upon which it could draw, nor were its practitioners able to create new political traditions that were in accord with Islamic law. Likewise, according to Daniel Pipes, Islamic states were faced with the necessity of incorporating the ideological discontinuities between the religious ideals of Islamic government, generally imagined as a pure and sacred Imamate, with the profane practices of managing the necessities of day to day governance.[16] Because they were unable to command broad political and moral support among their subjects, Islamic governments turned to royal slaves to fill the gap. When the division between the sacred (religion) and the profane (politics) became insurmountable, Islamic states came to rely on slave soldiers and officials to carry out functions and duties which were regarded as un-Islamic.[17] These slave soldiers effectively took over political power after the "state" was abandoned by both the religious elite and the

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[15]Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 124-125.

[16]See Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, Daniel Pipes, "Black Soldiers in Early Muslim Armies" in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, 1 (1980), 87-94 and Daniel Pipes, "Turks in Early Muslim Service" in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1978), 85-96.

[17]With the exception of minor differences of emphasis, this is essentially the argument made by both Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses* and Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*. On the sacred and profane, see Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

population at large as a result of their disgust with the profane nature of Islamic politics.[18] The institution of royal slavery evolved as a means to control the "outsiders" (the slaves) upon whom the ruling political elite were forced to rely.

The model suggested by both Pipes and Crone mistakenly reduces "Islam" to the single and essential "cause" of royal slavery. The authors neglect the long and varied history of of state building in the Islamic world. Both construe the dependence on royal slaves and slavery as a moral and political failure of epic proportions. The use of royal slaves cannot simply be tied to a singular notion and description of "Islam." Their suggestion that the use of royal slaves was solely the result of a unique "moral gap" has little broad, explanatory power, and does nothing to explain the use of royal slaves in other states and cultures.[19] Certainly, the tension between the sacred and profane existed in Islamic states, dating at least from the foundation of the Abbasid Caliphate (A.D. 749-1258) when royal slaves were first used in large numbers.[20] However, some Islamic governments created meaningful political traditions that were grounded in Islam. The reliance on royal slaves in government and the military was common in a bewildering variety of Islamic states, and cannot be explained simply by stating that these rulers had no other choice because the political

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[18]In general, see also Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 57-63.

[19]Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 81. Other states which relied on royal slaves include Old Oyo, Dahomey, Imperial Rome, Ming Dynasty China and Muscovy.

[20]See Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) and Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century.*

world had been abandoned by all but a few of the most power hungry and profane. By concentrating on the "causes" of royal slavery in Islam, both authors ignore the development and elaboration of royal slave systems themselves. How they were used is as important a question as why they were used.

Slaves were valuable because they were amenable to control and coercion in ways which were profoundly different from the free population. The use of slaves in the military and the government was intimately tied to the fact that they were indeed *slaves*, and thereby valuable to the ruler and to the state.[21] They were brought within the fold of Islam and used to enhance the position of the ruler and encourage the centralization of power in his hands. Centralized political power was not necessarily un-Islamic. Rather, it became clear to a variety of Islamic governments that royal slaves could be harnessed to serve and protect the state in a manner very different from free officials. In practice, Islamic states tended to be characterized by weak central authority coupled with a large, competitive group of officials who held their positions based on kinship and clientage. Royal slaves were able to transcend these divided loyalties because they were slaves, and therefore had very little corporate support. For instance, during the Abbasid period, royal slaves were used as soldiers by al-Mu'tasim, Caliph between 833-842, in order to counter the growing strength and independence of local

[21]See Chapters Two and Three. Although M.A. Shaban has noted that a number of the so-called Turkish military slaves were neither Turks nor slaves, it is clear that slaves were nonetheless widely used and recruited for service to the state. See M.A. Shaban, *The 'Abbasid Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) and Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 159.

governors and elites. These slave soldiers were drawn from outside the central lands of Islam in order to ensure they would have no ethnic or political affiliations with any faction other than the caliph. In a regime dominated by factional struggles based on household, family, and ethnic loyalties, the use of royal slaves was the perfect solution to ensure that the caliph would retain control of his position and power.[22] As royal slave institutions developed, however, royal slaves increasingly defined themselves as a corporate community.

Despite the theoretical absence of kin, royal slaves in Kano deliberately promoted kinship and similar bonds of loyalty and obligation among themselves and within the palace more generally. This contradiction is fundamental to understanding how the mamluk system operated in Kano. Royal slaves were useful because as slaves they were isolated from kinship networks; indeed, in theory, they were unable to develop families of their own, and thus had no progeny to compete with their loyalty to the ruler. In practice, however, slaves were seldom (if ever) content with their position. Royal slaves attempted to overcome their slave status, and over time established families through inter-marriage with other slaves. In Kano royal slaves also recruited clients through a system of "house apprenticeship." Slaves were recruited by the elite because, as socially isolated persons, they were economically and politically vulnerable. But, as they moved into positions of power, royal slaves

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[22]See Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 86-90. For an example from late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Morocco, see Alan R. Meyers, "Slave Soldiers and State Politics in Early 'Alawi Morocco, 1668-1727" in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16, 1 (1983), 39-48.

were also given the instruments that enabled them to "contest" their status as slaves. By reducing their social and political isolation, the Kano mamluks changed the way royal slavery functioned as an institution.

Royal slavery was prevalent in Islamic states not as a result of the withdrawal of the populace and religious elite (*ulama*) from participation in public, political life; rather, it could serve as a means to reduce the influence of the *ulama*. Political power could then be concentrated firmly in the hands of the central ruling authority. The institution allowed Islamic political leaders to insulate themselves from the more rigid and uncompromising demands of the *ulama*. Tension did occur between the ideal of government and its actual practice, and this was reflected in the writings of many Islamic scholars. Yet, in many cases there was not a wholesale withdrawal of scholars from government. In Kano, for example, members of the *ulama* assumed the roles of officials, imams, viziers, judges, and treasurers. The "local bureaucracy" was weak in contrast to palace slaves and the sons and nephews of the emirs.[23] As the agents and dependents of the ruler, royal slaves could, in a sense, operate outside *Shari'a* law. They were the slaves of the king, and decisions about if or how to inflict punishment on royal slaves was left to him. In general, slaves had a special status under Islamic law: "From the religious point of view the slave is considered a person, but being subject to his master he is not

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[23]Murray Last, "Aspects of Administration and Dissent in Hausaland, 1800-1968" in *Africa* 11 (1970), 347. For a broader discussion of kingship and slavery in Africa, see D. A. Strickland, "Kingship and Slavery in African Thought: A Conceptual Analysis" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18 (1976), 371-394.

fully responsible; he is at the same time a thing."[24] Thus punishment levied on a slave and a free person differed, nor could slaves offer testimony as witnesses in court.

The debate about the nature and role of government was carried out within the boundaries of Islam; what was Islamically justifiable, proper and legitimate was important to many political leaders. This was not simply a cynical manipulation of Islam by a heathen political elite, but was a means to ensure that Islamic government and states could and would survive. The political elite certainly shared many core Islamic values with the people they governed. Yet, they had to mold and shape these core values into a workable system of administration and government.[25] Royal slaves proved the perfect instruments to fulfil these broader aims; indeed, they played a central role in defining and determining the nature of political life in many Islamic states.

> . . . the military caste became separate from the rest of society; generals did not have brothers who were merchants or teachers in the mosque . . . this divorce of the military elite from the rest of society, by origin, by language and custom, was to be a distinctive feature of many Islamic societies.[26]

In this regard, royal slaves were especially valuable because they could be trained more extensively and thoroughly for service to the state than could the free-born. The free certainly had skills and

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[24]Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, 127.

[25]See, for example: Louis Brenner, "Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanimi and Religion and Politics in Borno" in John Ralph Willis (ed.), *Studies in West African Islamic History: The Cultivators of Islam* (London: Frank Cass, 1979).

[26]Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 161. See also Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, 115 and Al-Jahiz, *Risalah ila al-Fath b. Khaqan fi manaqib al-Turk wa ammat jund al-khilafah* [The Virtues of the Turk] in A. M. Harun (ed.), *Rasa'il al-Jahiz* (Cairo, 1964-65) vol.I, 1-86. Cited by Lassner, 116-136.

schools, but only slaves could be trained over long periods of time as a corporate unit isolated from the rest of society. Only slaves could perform tasks which crossed the boundaries of the sacred and the profane in Islamic society. Because royal slaves were slaves, those among them who developed specific skills and knowledge presented less of a threat to their masters than the freeborn, who could make legitimate claims to the power and authority of the emir or caliph.[27] Royal slaves were used, then, as means to develop skills and knowledge vital to the survival of the Islamic state and to the ruler of that state.[28] Royal slaves were systematically recruited and trained to hold political and military offices and execute the duties associated with these offices. Because Islamic political ideology was hostile to the notion of a "professional" officialdom, royal slaves were a vital means of ensuring that the state would have access to a corps of well-trained, "professional" officials, while also providing at least an appearance of upholding the standards of Islam. Slave systems were so ubiquitous because once a state became dependent on royal slave labour, the royal slaves themselves became reluctant to give up their places and positions in officialdom. Slaves were one pillar upon

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[27]See, for example: Jere L. Bacharach, "African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13 (1981), 471-495 and Douglas H. Johnson, "The Structure of a Legacy: Military Slavery in Northeast Africa" in *Ethnohistory* 36:1 (Winter 1989), 72-88.

[28]Horse archers, who were increasingly important in Islamic armies, required extensive training in order to employ the short, re-curved bow they used in battle. See Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1986), 4. For West Africa, see Robin Law, *The Horse in West African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and Robin Law, "Horses, Firearms, and Political Power in Pre-colonial West Africa" in *Past and Present* 72 (1976), 112-132

which the state built its political power.[29] Royal slaves as a group and as individuals helped to define the nature and operation of the Islamic state in Hausaland and beyond.

Because recent literature has generally focused only on the use of *military* slaves, and distinguishes them from "government" slaves who served the ruling class as administrators and government functionaries, the importance of the acquisition of skills and knowledge has gone largely unrecognized. Such a dichotomy, I argue, is non-existent. Military slaves were part of a broader institution of elite or royal slavery, which served rulers as officials, soldiers and guards. Furthermore, military slavery was linked to the use of royal slaves more broadly in government and administration. Orlando Patterson has also emphasized the important role royal slaves played in effecting structural change and innovation by virtue of their status as slaves and the manner in which they could thus be used in government:

> . . . the very novelty of the administrative challenge made the use of slaves mandatory. Slaves, as the ultimate human tools, are the ideal persons to be employed in major structural transformations . . . In Republican Rome, birth, citizenship, status and seniority were the major criteria for recruitment into public life. If the empire was to run properly, not only were wholly new occupations to be created, but the principle of merit had to be given some recognition. It was natally alienated persons who could be most readily employed in this way: ever ready to move physically and occupationally, not only upward but laterally, downward, and out; ever ready to retrain for entirely new positions and to accept, without complaint, what ever was offered in remuneration.[30]

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[29]In general, see Robin Law, "Slaves, Trade and Taxes: The Material Basis of Political Power in Precolonial West Africa" in *Research in Economic Anthropology* Vol I (1978), 37-52.

[30]Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 302.

The historian and political theorist Ibn Khaldun made particular note of the value of royal slaves in similar terms. In his depiction of the institution, royal slaves were useful because they had skills and abilities that the free-born did not possess.[31] In this particular case, slaves possessed these abilities because they were not part of the settled, civilized and luxurious world of the free.[32] He explicitly contrasts the decadence of the settled and civilised with the energy and vitality of the nomadic, which was in turn harnessed and controlled by the power of Islam. Royal slaves saved the state by means of their skills and abilities, and in so doing served the greater cause of Islam. The importance of personal dependence on the ruler, the slave status of royal slaves, cultural dissociation, and the possession of unique skills are all emphasized by Ibn Khaldun:

> When the [Abbasid] state was drowned in decadence and luxury . . . and overthrown by the heathen Tartars . . . because the people of the faith had become deficient in energy and reluctant to rally in defense . . . then it was God's benevolence that He rescued the faith by reviving its dying breath and restoring the unity of the Muslims in the Egyptian realms . . . He did this by sending numerous tribes, rulers to defend them and utterly loyal helpers, who were brought . . . to the House of Islam under the rule of slavery, which hides in itself a divine blessing. By means of slavery they learn glory and blessing and are exposed to divine providence; cured by slavery, they enter the Muslim religion with the firm resolve of true believers and yet with nomadic virtues unsullied by debased nature, unadulterated by the filth of pleasure, undefiled by the ways of civilized living, and with their ardor unbroken by the profusion of luxury . . . Thus one intake comes after another and generation follows generation, and Islam

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[31]Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al'Ibar wa-diwan al-mubtada wa l'-khabar*, vol 5 (Bulaq, 1284/1807) translated in Bernard Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Mohammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, vol 1 (New York, 1974).

[32]See also John Ralph Willis (ed.), "Introduction: The Ideology of Enslavement" in *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, vol I (London: Frank Cass, 1985), 1-15.

> rejoices in the benefit which it gains through them, and the branches of the kingdom flourish with the freshness of youth.[33]

After the fall of the Abbasid regime, a number of smaller, independent Islamic successor states proliferated throughout the Islamic world. The political fragmentation of the *dar al Islam* effectively ended the possibility that a single "universal" caliphate would be established. It became increasingly possible to divorce the exercise of political power from idealized religious justifications for its use. These developments also encouraged the use of royal slaves as part of a broader reliance on royal authority and power. The use of royal slaves was predicated upon the notion that the central authority of the caliph or emir was vital for the survival of Islam and Islamic states. As the guardians of the royal personage, and as a central component of the military, royal slaves became the guardians of the state, which was itself the guardian and provider of justice to the community. Justice for the populace and the protection of Islam were the avowed goals of government, and these could only be guaranteed by a powerful state supported by a strong, loyal army. By defending the state, royal slaves

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[33]Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al'Ibar wa-diwan al-mubtada wa l'-khabar*, vol 5 (Bulaq, 1284/1807) translated in Bernard Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Mohammad to the Capture of Constantinople* and cited in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 65. For a parallel African example, see undated letter to the *'ulama* of Egypt by Ahmad al-Mansur in Sultan Mulay 'Abd al-Hafiz, *Da' al-'atb al-qadim*, ms 400-11z, Royal Library, Rabat, translated and cited by John Hunwick, "Islamic Law and Polemics Over Black Slavery in Morocco and West Africa", unpublished paper presented at the Summer Institute on "Identifying Enslaved Africans: The 'Nigerian' Hinterland and the African Diaspora," York University, 14 July-1 August 1997, 10: "we selected those slaves to be made into soldiers and a channel for Islam, because of the qualities which they possess to the exclusion of others: they are a race who give little trouble . . . this race of slaves has strengthened this blessed affair of guarding the jihadist fortresses and encompassing the Islamic lands to which they were assigned and directed. They are tougher and more long suffering over its movements and relocations. They were suited to that and better fitted to undertake it most perfectly."

served an indispensable religious purpose: the preservation of Islam. The celebrated Ottoman author, Kinalizade 'Ali Celebi, noted:

> There can be no royal authority without the military
> There can be no military without wealth
> The subjects produce the wealth
> Justice preserves the subjects' loyalty to the sovereign
> Justice requires harmony in the world
> The world is a garden, its walls are the state
> The Holy Law (*Shari'ah*) orders the state
> There is no support for the *shari'ah* except through royal authority.[34]

In order to maintain and consolidate the state, the solidarity commanded by the tribal military leader had to be transformed into unquestioned royal and dynastic authority: "even the existence of a strong religious impulse, of a prophet and a revealed law, will not suffice to bring a state and society into being unless these are coupled with political power and solidarity."[35] Thus, the reliance of many Islamic governments on royal slaves was regarded as a means to protect and consolidate the state. They protected the state from political disintegration and allowed rulers access to individuals trained for the tasks demanded of them by the state.

Historically, the reason royal slavery as an institution developed was intimately related to the nature and ideology of governments based in and on the "royal household." As rulers attempted to increase their own personal control of the state (which they also represented), they

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[34]Kinalizade 'Ali Celebi, *Ahlak-i 'Ala'i*, Book II, quoted by Cornell Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism and 'Ibn Khaldunism' in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters" in *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XVIII, 3-4 (1983), 201.

[35]Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism and 'Ibn Khaldunism'", 211. See also Mustapha Ali, *Künh ül-ahbar* [The Essence of Histories], also cited in *ibid.*, 207.

came to rely on slaves, whom they selected and promoted, because in theory, and often in practice, their social isolation encouraged the development of a singular loyalty to the sovereign. Furthermore, as outsiders, they could transgress cultural, social and political boundaries (or norms) even the ruler was beholden to obey. This was not necessarily the result of a "rational" or "conscious" calculation of interests, but arose from the fact that in a very real way royal slaves remained outside relationships based on kinship, the family, and religion. They were feared because they were responsible to no person, idea or set of values beyond the ruler they served. Of course, in practice the actual social world of royal slaves differed from the theoretical imperatives encouraging their use. They became part of the "state" and developed their own political and social cultures in tandem with their participation in the world of the dominant elite. Participation in the system reinforced their status as slaves. While royal slaves created their own system of "belonging" their status as slaves also ensured they remained "outsiders."

Control and access to political power in Islamic royal slave systems was related to the nature and quality of the relationship between sultan and servant. Political rivalries often took the form of rivalries between the leaders of official households who competed for the favour of sultan and for access to political power. By establishing large households, it was possible to increase the chances of success (or survival) in the face of occasionally relentless political intrigue and factionalism. The state, as embodied by the ruler, stood at the heart

of the system.[36] Power was wielded by individuals, and from the perspective of the ruler, these individuals needed to be controlled in order to ensure that power would remain concentrated in a small number of hands. Bonds of loyalty and clientage were established as means to effect this control; royal slavery was perhaps the ultimate expression of control and coercion, by making some office holders "un-equal" it was possible to control and manipulate their actions.[37] Ideally, slaves would establish bonds of personal loyalty with their masters. In practice, however, royal slave communities evolved. This encouraged royal slaves to not just develop "personal loyalty" vertically, between master and slave, but, also horizontally with other members of the slave community.[38]

Thus, royal slaves were used by Islamic rulers to develop and elaborate their patrimonial households thereby enforcing their own authority and influence in government. Indeed, once royal authority was established, Ibn Khaldun himself emphasized that the ruler must "[seek help in governance] from persons close to the ruler through common descent, common upbringing, or old attachment to the dynasty. This makes such persons and the ruler work together in the same spirit."[39] According to Khaldun, the ruler must replace his tribal

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[36]Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Middle East: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 39. See also Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[37]See David Parkin, *Semantic Anthropology* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), xvi and Chapter Two.

[38]See Thomas Philipp, "Personal Loyalty and Political Power of the Mamluks in the Eighteenth Century" in Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann,(eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, 118-127.

[39]Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, vol II, 3-4 . Cited by Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism and 'Ibn Khaldunism'", 215.

supporters with dependent clients in order to consolidate his authority and that of his household and dynasty.[40] Both Pipes and Crone diminish the importance of patrimonial government in regard to the use of royal slaves, despite the fact that in much of the Islamic world political life was conducted in the language of the household unit. The use of royal slaves in government was akin to the use of domestic slaves in the households of the general population: they allowed the household-head to transcend certain bonds of family and kinship which could often limit his authority and ability to mobilize labour. In this sense, political power was personalized. Face to face relationships determined the course of events and policy, and were articulated in the so-called private space of the household. In the Ottoman Empire, for example: "the legitimate and natural locus of politics was the sovereign's household . . . and its innermost place-the harem. Authority was thus located in an inner circle, radiating outward as one moved to the outer circles of the elite and society."[41] The withdrawal of the population from political affairs did not encourage the use of royal slaves as posited by Pipes and Crone. Rather, their use was tied to the nature of government and authority that developed over time in many Islamic states. These states personalized power. The Abbasid state placed a "high premium . . . on personal loyalty and narrowly

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[40]Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. I, 372.

[41]Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 30-31, citing Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3, 6, 7-9.

focused group association."[42] Although Abbasid authority was highly centralized, it was also based on networks of inter-personal relations, rather than on a well defined government infrastructure.[43] Factions based around princes developed (along with the intrigue associated with factionalized politics) because personal ties were not always passed on to new caliphs, and the ruling house was itself beset by numerous candidates who were qualified to hold power. Royal slaves provided an efficient means of neutralizing personal, highly factionalized politics so common in many Islamic state systems.[44] In the early days of the Ottoman Empire, the state was under the dynastic rule of the "House of Osman," which relied on the loyalty and service of a dependent elite drawn from the royal slave recruitment and training system. This system provided the "military commanders and civilian administrators who made it possible for the sovereigns to govern a rapidly growing and ultimately vast empire."[45] In the case of Kano, the household of the ruler became a political arena in which the affairs of state were conducted and contested. This was especially evident during the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (c. 1463-1499), when slaves were first used as titled state functionaries.

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[42]Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, 245. See also Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[43]Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, 245.

[44]Likewise, the use of royal slaves in Imperial Rome can then be explained as the result of the development of the household of Augustus (the first Roman emperor) as the ruling unit of the imperial state. Roman Senators certainly spent much of their time in the Senate Chamber, but the real administrators were the slaves and freedmen of the imperial household who occupied official positions for numerous years. See P.R.C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) and Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[45]Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 20.

Islam, Kingship and Politics: The Case of Sarkin Kano Muhammad Rumfa

The dynamic described above was specifically evident in Kano during the reign of Muhammad Rumfa, the first fully Islamicized Hausa king [Hausa: *sarki*]. *Sarkin Kano* Rumfa initiated a number of important political and economic reforms in Kano that were modeled on past administrative practice, Islam and that of the court at Borno.[46] His experience to a degree parallels the experience of the jihadists in nineteenth century Kano. He built a palace, called the *gidan Rumfa* [Hausa: house of Rumfa], which served as the administrative centre for the region and as his own personal home. In so doing, Rumfa effectively asserted that the *sarki* was symbolically and practically at the centre of all Kano government.[47] While Rumfa was a Muslim, he also had a strong desire to strengthen the institution of kingship and to centralize power in his own hands.[48] Royal slaves were used to

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[46]Borno was an increasingly influential neighbour, see B. M. Barkindo, "Kano Relations with Borno" in B.M. Barkindo (ed.), *Kano and Some of her Neighbours* (Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1986), 147-168. For an overview, see John Edward Philips, "The Islamization of Kano Before the Jihad" in *Kano Studies* NS Vol. 2, No. 3 (1982/85), 32-52. For later periods see Muhammad Nur Alkali, "The Concept of Islamic Government in Borno under the Sayfawa Dynasty" in *Kano Studies* NS 1 (2), 1974/77, 29-36.

[47]It also fixed the state to one central place; see Murray Last, "From Sultanate to Caliphate: Kano ca. 1450-1800" in Bawuro Barkindo (ed.), *Studies in the History of Kano*, (Ibadan: Heinmann, 1983), 67-93.

[48]One tradition collected in 1913 actually criticizes Rumfa for increasing the power of the King beyond all previous custom and religious sanction: "[Rumfa] spread paganism and evildoing. It was he who married 1,000 maidens. He instructed (people) to prostrate themselves and put earth on their heads before saluting them . . . He completely destroyed the creed, he sold free men, he built a palace, the ones which the Kings of Kano enter to-day. He did what he wished." See R. Sutherland Rattray (editor), *Hausa Folk-Lore, Customs, Proverbs, etc.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 20-22.

secure and govern the Islamic state, yet, their use also bolstered royal authority to such an extent that Rumfa was criticized by Shaikh Muhammad 'Abd al Karim Al-Maghili, an Algerian Islamic reformer who arrived in Kano in c. 1492.[49] Al-Maghili introduced Islamic government to Kano in a political tract which placed the *sarki* at the centre of the state by making him solely responsible for the supervision and appointment of state officials, the collection of revenue and by obliging the people of Kano to obey him. Al-Maghili also emphasized that Islamic kingship should not be absolutist in character: "Emirship is diplomacy in the gown of authority. It is an obligation for every emir to arrange the delegation of authority in his kingdom properly, whether in periods of peace or war."[50] Al-Maghili argued that kingship could be dangerous because it sometimes led to the seizure and abuse of power. The delegation of power and authority was a necessary element of statecraft, as long as it occurred within the boundaries of Islam. On this basis, both free and slave officials were recruited to the service of the throne.[51]

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[49]Abdu Rahaman and the *Wangarawa* also assisted Rumfa in implementing some of his reforms.

[50]Shaikh Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, "Taj Al-Din Yajib 'Ala-Muluk" translated as "The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes" by Hassan Gwarzo, Kamal Bedri and Priscilla Starrat in *Kano Studies* NS 1 (2), 1974/77, 18.

[51]Usman dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello had read Al-Maghili extensively, and frequently cite material from his writings. According to M. Hiskett, he played an important role in defining and establishing the "reform tradition" of the Sudan. See M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries" in *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* XXV (1962), 586.

> Don't make yourself a slave to any gown, nor any horse, nor the slave of any carpet or to any particular locality. In general, the condition of the ruler and the condition of the subjects are two scales of a balance. So dispose wisely by increasing and decreasing (according to the situation) until the scales balance. MOREOVER, THE HEIGHT OF AFFLICTION IS THE ISOLATION OF THE RULER FROM THE SUBJECTS.[52]

Al-Maghili's manual of rulership served as a guide and as an admonition against any attempts to elevate the position of *sarki* beyond that sanctioned by Islam. For this reason, the text of the *Kano Chronicle* explicitly separates the innovations instigated by Al-Maghili and those of Rumfa himself:

> Abdu Rahaman lived in Kano and established Islam. He brought with him many books. He ordered R[u]mfa to build a mosque for Friday, and to cut down the sacred tree and build a minaret on the site. And when he had established the Faith of Islam, and learned men had grown numerous in Kano, and all the country round had accepted the Faith, Abdu Karimi returned to Massar, leaving Sidi Fari as his deputy to carry on his work." [53]

The Chronicler then states: "[Rumfa] was the author of twelve innovations in Kano [Sarkin Kano Rumfa she ne ya *fari* abu goma sha

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[52]Gwarzo, "The Crown of Religion," 18.

[53]The *Kano Chronicle* in H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs: Being mainly translations of a number of Arabic Manuscripts relating to the Central and Western Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1967-originally published in 1928), 111. See also the Hausa translation of the Ajami manuscript in D. M. East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu* Vol. II (Zaria: Translation Bureau, 1933), On the authorship and historiography surrounding the *Kano Chronicle* see John Hunwick, "A Historical Whodunnit: The So-Called 'Kano Chronicle' and its Place in the Historiography of Kano" in *History in Africa* 21 (1994), 127-146; John Hunwick, "Not Yet *The* Kano Chronicle: King-Lists with and without Narrative Elaboration from nineteenth-Century Kano" in *Sudanic Africa* iv, (1993), 95-130, Murray Last, "Historical Metaphors in the Kano Chronicle, *History in Africa* 7 (1980), 161-178 and Paul E. Lovejoy, Abdullahi Mahadi and Mansur Ibrahim Muhktar (eds.), "C.L. Temple's 'Notes on the History of Kano' [1909]: A Lost Chronicle of Political Office" in *Sudanic Africa* iv (1993), 7-76.

biyu chikin wannan kasa [My emphasis]."[54] He then lists the innovations.[55] According to Bargery, the word *fari* can be translated into English as "beginning", "commencement" or "origin".[56] This is not to deny that Rumfa borrowed and adopted ideas from Al-Maghili; rather, it is to suggest that the internal dynamic generated by the reliance on royal slaves served to increase kingly power in Kano. Rumfa elevated the institution of kingship in opposition to the *masu sarauta.* This policy secured a more orderly and well defined succession to the throne.[57] He therefore adopted ceremonial customs, such as the use of court musicians and ostrich feather sandals to increase the visible manifestations of kingly power. Likewise, he began the custom of taking every first-born virgin [Hausa: *kame*] for himself, and was reputed to have had one thousand wives.[58] Overall, Rumfa increased kingly power while attempting at the same time to place institutional restrictions on free-born title-holders. He created state compounds and lands for certain office-holders while also ensuring that they remained in Kano subject to his supervision and control.[59] Thenceforward, title-holders were required to stay in *birnin Kano.*

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[54]East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu*, 38.

[55]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 111 and East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu*, 38. The Kano Chronicle notes Rumfa extended the Kano city walls, established Kurmi market, was the first *sarkin kano* to use *dawakin zage* in war, as well as being the first to use *kakaki, figini*, and ostrich feather sandals (all important emblems of Kingship). He also instituted *kame* and *kulle* and was the first ruler to have one thousand wives.

[56]G. P. Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1993-originally published in 1934).

[57]See Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 111-112.

[58]*Ibid.*, 112.

[59]*Ibid.*, 112: "The *Galadima* Dabuli [Dabello] built a house at Goda [Gauda], and the *Madawaki* Badosa [Badusu] built a house at Hori [Hura]. *Chiroma* Bugaya [Bugai] built a house at Dabazaro [Dambazau]. Surely there was no Sarki more powerful that R[u]mfa!"

Although these innovations certainly can be regarded as un-Islamic, as they reflected "pre-Islamic" political practice, they were also a means by which Rumfa could ensure that the state, and Islam as a state religion, were protected.

Rumfa systematically used royal slaves, most especially eunuchs [Hausa: *baba*; pl. *babanni*], as important state officials and functionaries. The creation of titled offices occupied by eunuchs was a central part of Rumfa's policy of administrative centralization. Rumfa strengthened his own political position in relation to free-born officials by elevating loyal eunuchs and slaves to positions of power in the palace.[60] Thus, free-born men who had independent sources of power could not challenge his position as *sarki*. Eunuchs were of course unable to generate heirs and owed their influential positions entirely to Rumfa.[61] The most important titles assumed by the eunuchs in this period were: *dan kusubi, dan turbuna, ma'aji* [treasurer], *sarkin bai* [king of the slaves][62], *sarkin gabas* [king of the east], *dan jigawa* [caretaker of the plains], *sarkin kofa* [king of the gates], *sarkin tabarmi* [king of the mats], *sarkin takubba* [king of swords], *sarkin tudu* [king of the hill], *sarkin ruwa* [king of water]. Four other eunuchs were placed in charge of the royal bedchamber [Hausa: *turaka*]. These were called the *turaki, kashekusa* (from which the nineteenth century slave

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[60]See Adamu Mohammed Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-rule, 1882-1940* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1978), 11.

[61]However, eunuchs were often able to attract large followings composed of their clients. On eunuchs in Rome and Byzantium, See Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History,* 172-196.

[62]This was a free office in the nineteenth century. The *sarkin bai* had no special jurisdiction over slaves, and even before the *jihad* appears to have also been occupied by free men.

title *kasheka* was derived), Aljara or Aljira[63] and Al-Soro or Aswara.[64] The duties of royal slaves ranged from military scouting and overseeing the city gates and palace treasury to collecting taxes from outlying districts and executing criminals.[65] While some of the eunuch offices had private, household functions, many had important political functions and displaced free-born title-holders from their monopoly on administrative and military titles. The shape of the state was in large part a reflection of the shape and composition of Rumfa's own household. Islam was a central component of political structures and ideology in Kano, of which royal slaves were one aspect. They allowed Rumfa to centralize power in his own hands, and provided him with access to well-trained state functionaries.

Two of the offices occupied by slaves (*sarkin bai* and *turaki*) were included on the *Tara ta Kano* [the Kano nine] which was the council of state created by Rumfa. The *Tara ta Kano* was composed of top administrative and military officials, including the *galadima, madaki, wambai, makama, sarkin jarumai* [king of the brave ones], *sarkin bai, barde, sarkin dawaki tsakar gida* [chief of the horses in the middle of the palace] and *turaki.* According to oral data collected by Adamu Fika, these officials shared power with the *sarki* and were normally drawn

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[63]East's version is Aljara; Palmer's version is Aljira, see East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu,* 38 and Palmer, *Kano Chronicle,* 112.

[64]East's version is Aswara; Palmer's version is Al-Soro.

[65]See Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule,* 10. Fika provides a somewhat different and often confused list based on interviews he conducted in 1971 with Alhaji A. A. Mai Zaure and the Sarkin Kofa. See also Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle,* 112; East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu,* 38, Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari,* 29-30.

from non-royal chiefly or slave lineages.[66] The *Tara ta Kano* served as an advisory council which in effect limited the power that individual title-holders could wield, as their positions were formalized and constrained by the fact that no single official was paramount on the council. As an additional measure, Rumfa staffed the *Tara ta Kano* with two of his royal slaves, which was likely an attempt to secure his own interests in the council through his slaves. M.G. Smith notes that by the reign of Alwali four or five members of the *Tara ta Kano*, including the *makama, madaki* (when not a prince), *sarkin bai, dan iya* and the *sarkin dawaki tsakar gida*, performed the functions of an electoral council.[67]

C. L. Temple, the British Resident in Kano 1909-1910 commented in detail on the composition of the *Tara ta Kano* during the rule of the *Habe*. According to Temple's informants, one of whom was the royal slave *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, the Council consisted of nine principal officials; of these, three were slaves: the *w[a]mbai, sar[kin] bai*,[68] and *sar[kin] dawaki tsak[k]ar gida*. Both the *wambai* and *sarkin dawaki* are mentioned in *The Kano Chronicle* as positions held by eunuchs.[69]

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[66]Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 9. See also Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy: The Sarauta System and its Roles in Shaping the Society and Economy of Kano with Particular Reference to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" (Ph.D, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1982), 179.

[67]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 49.

[68]Temple claims that the emir's slaves were under the *sarkin bai*, which was certainly not true in the nineteenth century. He was a *hakimi* and in charge of the ribat at Dambarta, but he was not a palace official. The only connection the *sarkin bai* had with the emir was through the *shamaki*, the senior palace slave in Kano. See "C. L. Temple's 'Notes on the History of Kano' [1909]: A Lost Chronicle on Political Office" in *Sudanic Africa* iv (1993), 74.

[69]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 50. See also Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle*, 115-119: "He [*Sarki n Kano* Mohamma Shashere] was the first to give a eunuch the title of Wambai (the eunuch was called Damu [Duma]). He also gave to a eunuch called Dabba [Duba] the title of Sarkin Dawaki."

Furthermore, Temple notes that the nine positions were sub-divided into three groups of three in descending order of importance and influence. The first group, whom Temple calls "greater than the Sarki", was composed of the *galadima, madaki,* and *wambai.* The second three, who were considered "equal to the Sarki" consisted of the *makama, sarkin dawaki,* and *sarkin bai.* The last three offices were the *ciroma, dan iya, sarkin dawaki tsa[k]kar gi[d]da,* and were "less than the Sarki."[70] The organization of these officials is instructive. The highest of the royal slaves were set apart from one another, and were a minority in each of the three groups of office-holders. This suggests that the *sarki* and free-born officials hoped to reduce the royal slaves influence as a group, and to keep them from developing separate "slave" interests which could, perhaps, destabilize the government and threaten their own positions. It is also likely that the offices of *galadima, madaki,* and *ciroma* were occupied by relatives, often sons, of the *sarki.*[71] Thus, Rumfa and other Hausa rulers hoped to contain and control the power of both the slave and free officials by creating interpenetrating hierarchies of slave and free-born title-holders that served to increase the competition between the two groups of office-holders, while also minimizing any direct competition with the *sarki.*[72]

M.G. Smith, the foremost scholar of Kano's political institutions, notes that over time the membership in the *Tara ta Kano* varied. According to Smith, in the period before the *jihad,* the *sarki's* control of

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[70]*Ibid.*, 50-51.
[71]*Ibid.*, 53. The *ciroma* was normally occupied by the King's favorite son, not necessarily the eldest. The *galadima* was generally occupied by the heir apparent.
[72]See also Smith, *Government in Kano,* 79-84.

free and slave officiadom reached its apogee during the reign of *Sarkin Kano* Babba Zaki, although the chief was still enjoined not to over-rule the four senior non-royal councillors (the *madaki, makama, sarkin bai* and *wambai*).[73] Likewise, by the reign of Alwali, the office of *wambai* was drawn from one of the chief's agnatic kinsmen, and the office of *madaki* was also often occupied by a prince.[74] Thus, the description of Kano's political institutions recorded by Temple and described above appears too inflexible, as the composition of officialdom and the important administrative councils changed significantly over time.[75] Some titles passed to slaves, others to the sons of the king, and still others to the agnates of the ruler; nonetheless, the description offers an insight into the ideologies and constellations of power in Kano. Once the *sarkin kano* became the source of state patronage he could more easily control his officials and disperse power among them. Likewise, title-holders could be punished by having their offices removed or, in more drastic cases, their social position and status directly attacked:

> After this he arrested Madawakin Kano. Then he assembled many maidens, put the Madawaki on a donkey, and handed it over to the maidens, to drive round the town. They did as he commanded. The Madawaki died of chagrin. [Madawaki Kuma ya mutu saboda bakin chiki].[76]

This brief discussion of pre-*jihad* Kano is intended to show what led to the institutionalized use of royal slaves in an Islamic setting, and

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[73]*Ibid.*, 46-49, 79-84, 170-172.

[74]*Ibid.*, 49. For comparative examples, see M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) and M.G. Smith, *Affairs of Daura* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[75]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 75-79.

[76]Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle*, 120; East, *Labarun Hauasawa Da Makwabtansu*, 46.

the tensions that their use both reflected and could generate. After the jihadists conquered Kano, they had to grapple with the same political and religious imperatives and contradictions which led Rumfa to place eunuchs at the centre of the state and its administration.

The Sokoto Jihadists, Islamic Government and Royal Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano

The defining feature of the history of Kano and Hausaland in the nineteenth century was the Islamic *jihad* of Usman dan Fodio which spread from local beginnings in Gobir to engulf nearly all of the Central Sudan and beyond. However, as indicated above, the jihadists were not the only, nor even the first, people to create an Islamic state in Hausaland. The jihadists in effect inherited the legacy of Kano's pre-*jihad* past, which included the use of royal slaves as a means to centralize the power of the *sarki*, to professionalize Kano officialdom, and, ultimately, to defend Islam. The manner in which the royal slave system operated in nineteenth-century Kano was informed by this legacy, as well as the goals and policies of the Kano jihadist leadership. Nineteenth-century Kano officialdom coalesced around the intermixture of Hausa political forms and jihadist ideology about the proper method and structure of government. However, it is vital not to draw too stark a distinction between Hausa and Fulani administrations. Although the jihadists may have initially given their political titles different names, they nonetheless conceptualized

political power as personal power. Politics was tied to kinship, patronage, personalities and titled offices.[77] Titles approved by the jihadist leadership encompassed roles similar in scope to Hausa official titles used in pre-jihad Kano. Oral traditions reflect the continuity in state structure between the pre and post *jihad* administrations. The institution of royal slavery was central to this continuity; they were used for similar reasons and in parallel ways both before and after the jihad.

The reliance on royal slaves reflected the transition which occurred from the early jihadist state to the highly centralized and elaborate state system of later Kano governments. Their use was intended to secure control of the administration and in so doing safeguard the continued existence and prosperity of the Islamic state. Thus, the reasons royal slaves were used in Kano were also related more broadly to the practical and ideological motivations for their use in the rest of the Islamic world. It was also the result of very particular local historical circumstances. A series of rebellions in Kano Emirate necessitated the use of royal slaves to defend the state and the emirship. They also allowed the Sullubawa clan to consolidate its position as the ruling house in Kano. The evolution of royal slavery in Kano should be seen as an integral part of the elaboration and resurgence of a more general officialdom which operated within an Islamicized Hausa/Fulani political system. Their use both secured the state and enhanced the power of the emir, who

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[77]See Murray Last, "Aspects of Administration and Dissent in Hausaland, 1800-1968, 347-348.

relied on his royal slaves as bodyguards, soldiers, plantation managers and administrators. Overall, the ideology of the jihadist leaders, and the nature of local conditions and personalities, determined the form of nineteenth century government in Kano.

Thanks to prodigious scholarship, the general course and ideology of the jihad are well known.[78] The *jihad* was both a religious and social movement, and had both religious and social goals. It was in large part directed toward eliminating both un-Islamic religious practices and what was perceived as the corruption and absolutism of the Hausa kings.[79] The jihadist literature did not serve as a comprehensive manifesto of government; rather, it provided moral and political legitimacy for the jihadist cause. In short, the jihadists had to show that Hausa governments were un-Islamic in order to justify a *jihad* of the sword against them. Thus, jihadist authors argued that the *Habe* political system and its leaders were too far removed from God and Islamic religious doctrine.[80] The material written by the leading

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[78]See M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, Ibraheem Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman dan Fodio*, Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction;" R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*; Murray Last, "The Reform in West Africa: the *jihad* movements of the nineteenth century" in Ajayi and Crowder (eds.), *The History of West Africa*, II, 15-36, Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio*, Mervyn Hiskett, "The Nineteenth Century *Jihads* in West Africa" in Flint (ed.), *Cambridge History of Africa* vol. 5, 125-169, H.A.S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, Marilyn Waldman, "The Fulani *Jihad*: a Reassessment," Marilyn Waldman, "A Note on the Ethnic Interpretation of the *jihad*," 286-291.

[79]See Usman dan Fodio, *Tanbih al-Ikhwan*. Cited by M. S. Zahradeen, "Abd Allah ibn Fodio's contributions to the Fulani Jihad in Nineteenth Century Hausaland" (Ph.D., unpublished, McGill University, 1976), 34 and translated by H.R. Palmer, "An Early Fulani Conception of Islam" in *Journal of the African Society* XIII (1913-1914), 407-414 and XIV (1914-1915), 185-192 and XV (1916), 53-59.

[80]See Usman dan Fodio, *Nur al-albab*, translated by Hamet, and cited by Zahradeen, 25; Usman dan Fodio, *Ta'lim al-ikhwan bi-al-umur allatu kaffarna niha muluk al-sudan alladhina kanu min ahl hadhih al-buldan*, cited by Zahradeen, 26 and translated by B. G. Martin, "Unbelief in the Western Sudan;" in *Middle Eastern Studies* 4 (1967), 50-97, Usman dan Fodio, *Wathiqat ahl al-sudan*, cited by Zahradeen, 33 and translated by

jihadist scholars had an important impact on Kano government, and the eventual revival of royal slavery. The leaders of the *jihad* in Kano drew their legitimacy from the teachings, actions and writings of Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello. Their theories and conceptions about Islam and government were the initial foundations of Kano government in the post-*jihad* period. This is not to argue that the leaders of the Kano *jihad* behaved in a single, monolithic way; rather, their actions and ideals were informed by the teaching of Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello.

Jihadist criticism of the office-holding system was predicated upon the notion that it promoted the growth of corruption and personal greed. This in turn encouraged the economic and political oppression of the poor throughout Hausaland. Jihadist propaganda tried to highlight and condemn these acts of oppression. Accusations of oppression and corruption helped to furnish a social platform for the jihadist movement. Hausa officials oppressed the poor and needy mainly by taking bribes and illegally confiscating their possessions. By ignoring the legitimate demands of the *talakawa*, the *Habe* kings in effect "shut the door in the face of the needy."[81] As a result, the commoners had no access to law or the courts unless they were willing

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A.D.Bivar, "The *Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan*: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad" in *Journal of African History* II, 2 (1961), 235-243 and Usman dan Fodio, "*Kitab Al-Farq:* A Work On the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthman Dan Fodio" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* XXIII, 3 (1960), 569. For an account of the *jihad* in Kano, See Muhammad b. Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar* translated by Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa (Kano: Tofa Press, 1989). See also Adam Muhammad ibn Adam el-Funduki, *Al-ilan bi ta'rikh Kano* [1933/1934].

[81] *Ibid.*, 568-569.

and able to pay large sums in bribes: "if you have an adversary (in law) and he precedes you to them, and gives them some money, then your word will not be accepted by them, even though they know for a certainty your truthfulness."[82]

> [They based] their sovereignty on three things: the people's persons, their honour, and their possessions; and whomsoever they wish to kill or exile or violate his honour or devour his wealth they do so in pursuit of their lusts, without any right in the *Shar'ia* . . . One of the ways of their government which is well known, is that they bring presents which they call *ghaisuwa* . . . One of the ways of their government is the taking of the people's beasts of burden without their permission to carry the Sultan's food to him. Whoever follows his beast the place where they unload it, they return it to him, but he who does not follow, his beast is lost, and they call this *kamuwa*.[83]

In addition, Usman dan Fodio argued that the kings of Hausaland were unbelievers because they mixed "heathen practices with those of Islam, [they] have accepted Islam but have not abandoned . . . . the veneration of rocks and trees . . . ."[84] According to Muhammad b. Salih, when Alwali was close to defeat, he sent a letter to a number of his officials and offered to negotiate peacefully. The Kano jihadists replied: "we have instructed you to do that at the beginning but you refused and assembled your army and sent them to attack us and Allah disgraced you. And now that you have neither movement [e.g. the

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[82]*Ibid.*

[83]*Ibid.*

[84]Usman dan Fodio, *Tamiz al-Muslimin min al-Kafirn* Post Graduate Reading Room, Bayero University, Kano, MS no. 122. Quoted by Ibrahim Halil Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," 106. See also Uthman ibn Fudi, *Nur al-albab*, as cited by Zahradeen, 25 and Uthman ibn Fudi, *Ta'lim al-Ikhwan bi-al-umur allati kaffarna biha muluk al-sudan alladhina kanu min ahl hadhih al-buldan* as translated by B. G. Martin, "Unbelief in the Western Sudan" and as cited in Zahradeen, 26.

ability to move freely] or power, you have turned to us."[85] The jihadists conquered Kano soon thereafter, with the aim of reforming the system Alwali represented. Because the backsliding Hausa rulers were not Muslims, their kingdoms were not properly Islamic states. In his account, Salih listed each *Habe* king not to celebrate their achievements, but to give thanks that the regime had been over thrown.[86] Likewise, Usman dan Fodio argued that the *Habe* regimes needed to be swept away and replaced by a government which was Islamically ordained and Islamically organized, all under the rule of Shari'a law.

> That to make war upon the heathen King who does not say "There is no God but Allah" on account of the custom of his town, and who makes no profession of Islam, is obligatory by assent; and that to take the government from him is obligatory by assent . . . And that to make war upon backsliding Muslims who do not own allegiance to any of the Emirs of the Faithful is obligatory by assent . . . .[87]

In 1806 Usman dan Fodio composed the *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra 'Ala L-'Ibad* which was intended to serve as the "theoretical basis of his Islamic government."[88] In this work he defined the four pillars of Islamic government and *mulk*, or kingship/sovereignty. Most

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[85]Salih, *Taqyid al-ahkbar*, 34.

[86]*Ibid.*, 35. Salih singles out Rumfa for praise, however, because he claims that Islam first became strong in Kano during this period.

[87]Uthman ibn Fudi, *Wathiqat ahl al-sudan*, cited by Zahradeen, 33 and translated by Bivar. See also Usman dan Fodio, *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, in Thomas Hodgkin (ed.), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology* (London, 1975), 244-247: "The government of a country is the government of its king without question. If the King is a Muslim, his land his Muslim; if he is an Unbeliever, his land is a land of Unbelievers."

[88]Uthman Ibn Fudi, *Bayan Wujub Al-Hijra 'Ala-'Ibad*, edited and translated by F. H. El Masri (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press and Oxford University Press, 1978), 25. Also important are Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya al-Hukkum* (1806/1807) and Muhammad Bello, *Usul al-Siyasa* (1807).

importantly, he emphasized that, in addition to the emir, Islam sanctioned four official positions in government. First, an "upright" *wazir* was necessary to provide the king with good advice and guidance: "The greatest catastrophe which can befall rulers and subjects is to be deprived of good *wazirs* and helpers."[89] Secondly, an Islamic government needed a *qadi* who would not be "restrained by anyone's censure from upholding God's law."[90] Thirdly, a Chief of Police should be appointed who would ensure that the "weak obtain justice from the powerful."[91] Finally, he allowed a Commissioner of *kharaj* who collected tax but did not "oppress the subjects."[92] The precise division of responsibilities among a list of approved official positions served to address the jihadists' specific political complaints of the *Habe* rulers and state system.

Furthermore, the tract demonstrates that the jihadists were more than willing to sanction the use of titled officials, as long as they behaved justly. As M. Hiskett has convincingly argued, the jihadists were not trying to "restore the original model of the Islamic state as it was believed to have existed in the time of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs"[93] but based their ideas about government on "the late Abbasid jurists and redactors . . . This is not that of the early *umma* of Medina [but] is a complex structure with a hierarchy of wazirs . . .

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[89]*Ibid.*, 67-68.
[90]*Ibid.*
[91]*Ibid.*
[92]*Ibid.*
[93]M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* XXV (1962), 592.

ministers; governors; chief *qadis*; emirs; chiefs of police; and a whole civil service right down to market inspectors of weights and measures."[94] On matters of government, Usman dan Fodio frequently quoted Ibn Jamam, Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Suyuti.[95] Likewise, Abdullahi dan Fodio cited Ibn al-'Arabi (sixth century, Islamic calendar), al-Qarafi (seventh century), al-Qurtubi (seventh century), Ibn Farhun (eighth century), Ibn 'Arafa (ninth century), al-Maghili (tenth century) and al-Laqani (eleventh century).[96] In this sense, the experience of the Sokoto jihadists paralleled the progression from Imamate to Caliphate that occurred in the Islamic heartland. It became necessary to establish a complex administrative hierarchy to maintain order, justice and good governance. As the nineteenth century progressed, the use of royal slaves was increasingly used to augment the political power of the emir at the expense of free officialdom.

This process was the subject of contestation and debate, centred on the proper role and the place of the caliph and of the state.[97] All the jihadists agreed, however, that it was essential for Muslim rulers to establish Muslim institutions in order to properly govern and improve

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[94]Ibid.

[95]'Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti never visited Hausaland, but was likely in contact, as he gave advice to the King of Agades, Muhammad ibn Sottofen and the King of Katsina, Ibrahim Sura, to which Usman dan Fodio referred in *Tanbih al-ikhwan*. See Zahradeen, 104-105.

[96]Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform," 592. See also *Diya al-Hukkam*, in which Abdullahi relied on Abbasid scholars. Mahadi has suggested this encouraged the continuation of the "sarauta" system, Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 382.

[97]For the constitutional position of the Caliph or *Amir al Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful), see Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy*, 43-44: "Obedience was due to him from all his subjects as a matter of obligation enjoined by the *shari'a*. His duty was to uphold religion and exercise political leadership."

the country and their subjects.[98] The more radical elements of Usman dan Fodio's companions and followers envisioned a trim, simple, orthodox Islamic state modeled on that of the early Caliphate.[99] Others argued that the reliance on officials was acceptable and Islamically proper. They justified their position by referring to the Abbasid Caliphs, who delegated much of their administrative work to officials in recognition that such an innovation was necessary given the radical political changes which had occurred since the establishment of the early Caliphate.[100] Much of this debate was carried on between Usman dan Fodio and his brother, Abdullahi dan Fodio.[101]

Abdullahi dan Fodio was most uncompromising in this regard. He maintained that Hausa titles encouraged despotism, and therefore only Islamic titles should be used.[102] In the *Kitab al-Farq* Usman dan Fodio also counselled the newly appointed Fulani emirs to repudiate the

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[98]Usman dan Fodio, *Siraj al-Ikhwan fi ahamm ma yuhtaj ilayhi fi hadha al-zaman.* Cited by Zahradeen, " 'Abd Allah Ibn Fodio's Contributions," 30.

[99]See Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 46-60 and R.A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, 41-43.

[100]Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 48.

[101]See Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya al-Sultan wa ghayrihi min al-Ikhwan fi ahamm ma yutlab 'ilmuhu fi umur al-zaman* for the conservative position and Usman dan Fodio, *Najm al-Ikhwan* for the liberal position. Cited by Muhammad Sani Zahradeen, " ' 'Abd Allah Ibn Fodio's Contribution," 14; 24

[102]Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya al-Sultan*, cited by Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History*, 153 and Zahradeen, " ' 'Abd Allah Ibn Fodio's Contribution," 12. See also, Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Tazyin al-Waraqat* edited and translated by M. Hiskett (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1963), 121-122: "When my companions left, and my aims went awry/I was left behind among the remainder, the liars/Who say that which they do not do, and follow their desires . . . whose purpose is the ruling the countries and their people/In order to obtain delights and acquire rank,/According to the customs of the unbelievers, and the titles of their/sovereignty./And the appointing of ignorant persons to the highest offices,/And the collecting of concubines, and fine clothes."

forms, symbols and language of Hausa political life.[103] This meant the elimination of Hausa traditional titles: "Therefore do not follow their way in government, and do not imitate them, not even in the titles of their king such as . . . ghaladima [*Galadima*] and ubandawaki [*Uban Dawaki*] . . . and sarkin yari [gari]. Address your chief emir as 'Commander of the Believers.' "[104] However, Usman dan Fodio was criticizing the titles for what they represented: corruption and oppression. This stand was also popular with the *talakawa* who had been subject to the excessive financial demands of the Hausa elite. The demand to eliminate Hausa titles clearly did not mean the absolute repudiation of officialdom and the use of titled state functionaries. While in *Najm al-Ikhwan* Usman dan Fodio argued that the proper form of Islamic government was a caliphate and not a kingdom, the broader and more important distinction lay in the conduct of the government and its officials: "As long as the essential character and conduct of government and its functionaries were Islamic, the titles they adopted would not matter, especially among a people who were all too familiar with such titles."[105] He argued that it was impossible to eliminate the language and forms of the old Hausa political system. Official titles were, by themselves, meaningless. It

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[103]See D. M. Last and M. A. Al-Hajj, "Attempts at Defining a Muslim in 19th Century Hausaland and Bornu" in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 3,2 (1965), 239.
[104]*Kitab Al-Farq*, 579.
[105]Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History*, 153.

was the individuals who occupied the titles who would be judged according to Islamic law and religion.[106]

Usman dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello explicitly acknowledged that each emir should be allowed to select a body of servants and officials. The value and necessity of official appointments were recognized as the means to ensure that an emir would have the resources at his disposal to govern efficiently and effectively:

> . . . it is the duty of every Amir to endeavour his utmost in seeking the best officials from the different classes of men, because he needs a group of them for consultation and advice, a group for direction of war, a group to protect him, a group for elegance and pride, a group for propaganda and praise, a group for knowledge . . . know also that most of the evil that befalls the state comes from the appointment of officers who are anxious to have the appointment, because none would be keen on such but a thief in the garb of a hermit and a fox in the guise of a pious worshipper-someone who is keen in the collection of money, sacrificing for such his religion and integrity . . .such a person, unworthy of the appointment to office, would enslave the slaves of God [the common men] and use their wealth for his own ends. Once the rights of the Muslims are usurped and their wealth unjustly taken, their intentions become wicked, their obedience diminishes, the affairs of state become shaky . . . Mamun said 'whenever I was faced with a problem in my realm I found out that the cause was the injustice of officials . . . .'[107]

Usman dan Fodio did not maintain that the number of political offices be restricted to four; rather, he laid the foundations for a political system which encouraged governance based on consultation between the ruler and his officials rather than one based on absolutist principles. According to Usman dan Fodio, it was obligatory for a Muslim leader to "adhere to consultation . . . One of the worst

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[106]Usman dan Fodio, *Najm al-ikwan*, cited by M.T.M. Minna, "Sultan Muhammad Bello and His Intellectual Contribution to the Sokoto Caliphate" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, 1982), 174.

[107]Muhammad Bello, *al-Gayth al-Shu'bub*, cited *ibid.*, 250-254.

qualities in a king is to be opinionated and neglect consultation."[108] In contrast, Hausa governments allowed succession by hereditary right, sometimes by force, to the "exclusion of consultation."[109] Succession should not be based on heredity. It was legitimate for a son to succeed a father only if the son possessed the proper qualities and qualifications for office.[110]

Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello each argued that "justice" should be the central principle upon which a new Islamic government was based. Bello, for example, noted that "justice is all that administration is about."[111] It was not only the ruler who was obliged to be just, but so were his officials and administrators.[112] More importantly, the ruler, and his army, were placed that the centre of Islamic government; the wealth and prosperity of the state secured justice for the population.

> The ruler is a mansion and the army is its foundation; if the foundation is strong the mansion lasts, if it weakens the mansion collapses. Hence there is no Sultan without an army, and no army without money, and no money without *Kharaj* and no *Kharaj* except with prosperity and no prosperity without justice, and thus justice becomes the foundation of other managements.[113]

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[108]*Ibid.*, 65.
[109]*Ibid.*, 567.
[110]See Sulaiman, *Revolution in History*, 153.
[111]Muhammad Bello, *Usul al-Siyasa*, cited by Minna, 236.
[112]Minna, 237.
[113]Muhammad Bello, *al-Ghayth al-Wabl*, cited by Minna, 268. See also Shehu Yamusa, "The Political Ideas of the Jihad Leaders: Being Translation, Edition and Analysis of (1) Usul Ul-Siyasa by Muhammad Bello and (2) Diya Ul-Kukkam by Abdullahi B. Fodio" (M.A., unpublished, Bayero University Kano, 1975).

The jihadists argued, then, that the nature of Hausa government had encouraged the development of kingly despotism, and inculcated excessive arrogance and pride in the titleholders: "you cannot see one of them who does not give himself airs, and anyone who shows the least lack of respect [for them was punished]."[114] According to the jihadists, Hausa kings were unjust and corrupt, as were the officials in their service. *Habe* kings granted authority to individuals who sought only the wealth and power that official titles brought with them. In contrast, jihadist political tracts emphasized that political appointments should be based on an individual's piety and knowledge of Islam: "Our Community today thanks to God, needs only piety and following of the Sunna on the part of men in authority."[115] Governors over districts should be men of sincerity, honesty and resolution. They should not be appointed arbitrarily. Umar b. al-Khattab was offered as an example of the ideal Islamic leader. When al-Khattab appointed a subordinate as an emir or governor, he enjoined the title-holder not to ride mules, wear fine clothes or eat fine food, not to employ chamberlains and not to ignore the needs and welfare of the people: "He used to say to him 'I do not appoint you over men's persons and honour nor over their wealth; I appoint you to lead them in prayer and settle their differences equitably.' "[116] The government

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[114]*Kitab al Farq*, and Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya al ta'wil*, vol. II, cited by Minna, 173. See also Murray Last, " 'Injustice' and Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate" in J.F. Ade Ajayi and J.D.Y. Peel (eds.), *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder* (London: Longman, 1992).

[115]Abduallahi dan Fodio, *Diya al-Sultan* quoted by El Masri in *Bayan Wujub Al-Hijra 'Ala-'Ibad*, 31.

[116]Uthman Ibn. Fudi, *Bayan Wujub Al-Hijra 'Ala-'Ibad*, 74.

envisioned by the jihadists included the use of titled officials, but, ideally these officials would not behave extravagantly nor commit acts of oppression and injustice. Nowhere do jihadist writers specifically prohibit the use of titled slave functionaries; indeed, the use of royal slaves was integral to the consolidation of the jihadist state. Royal authority was necessary to "preserve order in the world, since a people without a ruler are like fish in the sea - the big swallows the small, the strong devours the weak . . . Without political authority people's affairs would not be properly organized, nor their livelihood sustained, nor would they enjoy the good life."[117] Therefore, Usman dan Fodio also argued that is was extremely important for functionaries of state to appear dignified and worthy of authority. In order to preserve the respect of the people, and thus the authority of the state, Usman dan Fodio permitted title-holders to wear expensive and elaborate clothes.[118] He also agreed to re-introduce certain court rituals prevalent during the *Habe* period which symbolized the special and vital position of the emir and his officials: "Islam is like a foundation and government is like a guard: whatever has no foundation will eventually collapse, and whatever has no guard will eventually be lost."[119] In Kano Emirate, the jihadist leadership appropriated the symbols of political power and hegemony to legitimize and secure their own rulership.

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[117]Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History*, 155, paraphrasing Usman dan Fodio, *Najm al-Ikhwan.*
[118]Usman dan Fodio, *Misbah al-Zaman*, cited by Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History*, 154.
[119]Usman dan Fodio, *Najm al-Ikhwan*, cited in *ibid.*, *A Revolution in History*, 156.

How, then, did the jihadist's admonitions and ideology affect the conduct of the local jihadists in Kano? Overall, nineteenth century Kano officialdom developed as a result of the interaction between jihadist Islamic ideology and local patterns of office-holding. The jihadists emphasized that government could be run Islamically even with the adoption of Hausa titles. The success or failure of the *jihad* and the jihadist's version of an Islamic system would not be determined on the battlefield, but by the ability of the Fulani elite to transform and adapt the political culture of the Hausa rulers. Political culture was expressed and transmitted via kinship relations, through networks of patronage and power inside the Kano palace. In Kano, the jihadists met a long and well established political system that was both adaptable and flexible. The system encouraged the emergence of powerful individuals who competed for the rewards that came with political office. Participation in government was contingent upon the possession of these titled offices, and official careers were conceptualized through the lens of official titles, positions, and duties.[120]

Initially, however, the Kano palace and centre of government was left unoccupied by the jihadist forces. A short period of uneasy, collegial rulership followed. The Fulani leadership initially refused to occupy the palace and appoint an emir because they simply could not decide amongst themselves whom to nominate. To solve the impasse, in c. 1807-08, Suleiman b. Abu Hamman was appointed as emir by

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[120]On political institutions, See Smith, *Government in Kano*, Smith, *Government in Zazzau* and Smith, *Affairs of Daura*.

Usman dan Fodio. Suleiman was given the position because of his reputation as an Islamic scholar.[121] Despite his learning, he was young and untested and soon faced serious difficulties in consolidating his rule. At first he was not allowed into the *gidan Rumfa* on the orders of his fellow jihadists, as Malam Jibrim stated: "[if] we enter the Habe's houses and we beget children, they will be like these Habes and do like them."[122] Malam Jibrim's order also expressed the fear that the jihadists would simply recreate the Hausa political system they had just overthrown.

Jihadist policy was initially determined by the surviving leaders of the victorious clans: Malam Bakatsine (Jobawa), Malam Jamau (Sullubawa), Dabo Dambazau (Dambazawa), Malam Jibir, brother of the late Abdurrahman Goshi (Yolawa), Abdullahi, son of the late flag-bearer, Dan Zabuwa (Danejawa), and Dan Tunku (Yerimawa, who also held the title of Sarkin Fulanin Dambarta under *Sarkin Kano* Alwali). These leaders sought to gain control over their home areas as a means to establish secure power bases from which they could influence politics inside Kano city. Soon they became the leaders of broader corporate groups composed of their lineage relations and clients which in turn provided them with political support for claims to office and positions of influence. The re-creation of officialdom began almost as soon as the Fulani clan leaders occupied the compounds of former

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[121]Interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998. See also M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano 1350-1950*, 210-213, W. F. Gowers, *Gazetteer of Kano Province* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1921), 12, Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano Ta Dabo Cigari* (Zaria, Gaskiya, 1958), 49.

[122]Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle*, 128.

Hausa office-holders. The Fulani were associated with the official titles of the leader's compound which they occupied. Malam Jamau, the Flag-Bearer (*mai-tuta*), occupied the compound of Alwali's *Sarkin Dawaki*; Mandikko, Malam Bakatsine's son, moved into the compound of the *Madaki*; Dabo Dambazau entered the compound of the *Sarkin Bai*; Umaru, the son of Malam Jibir, took over the house of the *Ciroma*; Malam Dahiru baSuleibe, a kinsman of Malam Jamau, occupied the *Galadima's* compound; and Abdullahi, Dan Zabuwa's son, settled in the compound of the *Dan Iya*.[123] Each person came to be identified with these Hausa titles. The occupation of the palace proved to be no different, and the population of Kano interpreted the Fulani take-over through their own cultural matrix. Soon the jihadist government came to take on the language and forms of the *Habe* system. However, the Fulani leadership did make important changes to the title-holding system, and made specific changes to the status and distribution of a number of official titles.

The development of an effective administration was made more difficult by the fact that the functionaries who had previously managed the system had been stripped of their titles and positions. Very few of Alwali's former officials even remained in Kano after the jihadist victory. Among the royal slaves, *Shamaki* Mohamma Jifa and an unnamed *Dan Rimi* accompanied Alwali when he left Kano; the others had either fled or were removed from office.[124] Mohamma Jifa did return to Kano after Alwali's death at Burumburum, but he died soon

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[123]M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 206.
[124]*Ibid.*, 205.

afterwards. The dispersal of the royal slave community resulted in the elimination of the primary corporate repository of knowledge about the Emirate and its government. While the revival of Hausa political titles and forms was a response to local opinion in Kano and to a variety of external and internal threats to Fulani rule, it was also a response to the advice of former royal slaves, who argued that Kano could only be governed through the traditional office-holding system that pre-dated the *jihad* and who most definitely wanted to maintain their own positions in Kano officialdom. Individual royal slaves helped to bridge the political gap between the *Habe* and Fulani regimes by playing a central role in the transition from Suleiman's collegial system to Dabo's more centralized emirship. Once the initial phase of the jihad was over, they emerged as a central pillar of the political system that was forged by Ibrahim Dabo, the second Emir of Kano.

These early difficulties reflected the increasing tensions among the Kano jihadist leadership about who should rule Kano. Suleiman was in a vulnerable political position because he controlled only Kano city, and was otherwise financially poor and politically isolated. He was also faced with a serious military threat from both Dan Tunku and Dabo Dambazau.[125] The emirship was weak because Suleiman had no cadre of officials he could rely upon to balance the power and position of the Fulani clan leaders. The network of individuals who held titled offices and were responsible for the administration of the Emirate had been swept away by the jihadists. Suleiman therefore had no

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[125]Muhammad b. Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar*, 46 and Smith, *Government in Kano*, 220.

councillors or advisors who possessed knowledge about the means and methods of government and administration in Kano. More unfortunately, he had no access to the titled royal slave network which in the past had served as a bulwark against the accumulation of power by free-born titled officials.[126] While Suleiman was not faced with precisely the same difficulties as his *Habe* predecessors (mainly because the Fulani system of government was more inchoate), he still had to find some way of managing influential Fulani clan leaders, many of whom had independent bases of military and political power, as well as a great deal of ambition. Without the option of placing royal slaves in positions of authority to counter the claims of the Fulani aristocracy, Suleiman adopted the only course of action open to him, and probably the only course he would have considered given his reputation as an Islamic scholar: he instituted an informal, consultative emirship that made him a first among equals rather than a dynastic ruler. Gradually, a number of the Fulani clan leaders became his royal councillors, as Suleiman was both unable and unwilling to establish autocratic rule in Kano. Oral traditions as recounted by Alhaji Abubakar Sadauki and *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero reflect Suleiman's political weakness and the subsequent difficulties he had administering an Emirate as large and complex as Kano, although they also stress his devotion to Islam. Suleiman is reputed to have sat on the ground, eye to eye, with visitors to the palace, rather than occupy an elevated throne surrounded by slaves and

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[126]Royal slave titles were not formally recognized during Suleiman's reign, although he did have a number of personal slaves. See Salih, *Taqyid al-Akhbar*, 45-46.

courtiers.[127] He is even said to have shaken the hands of visitors in contravention of Hausa custom and tradition. Alhjai Sadauki and *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero portray Suleiman's informality as Islamically proper but also stress that it was politically unwise for an emir to behave in such a manner.

In 1819, Ibrahim Dabo b. Mahmud (1819-1846), of the Sullubawa clan, assumed the throne, and launched a policy that was designed to centralize the administration and boost revenue:

> Dabo sent to Sar. Mus. Bello to inform him that the local headmen were collecting all taxes and giving him 10% only. He asked leave that he should collect all taxes himself, and give the local chiefs 10% and horses and arms. Bello gave him leave. He ordered from 500 to 1200 cowries Kurdin Kasa to be levied on each farm. One third of the share which remained to the Emir of Kano was sent to Sokoto.[128]

This policy was formulated to address the political instability caused by a series of rebellions in towns located outside Kano city proper. The most serious revolts were instigated by *Galadima* Mohammad Sani, the brother of Emir Suleiman, by Dabo Danbazau, who had twice been passed over for the emirship, and by Dan Tunku.[129] In response, Dabo formally resurrected Hausa political symbols and customs, and built a series of *ribats*, or fortified settlements, to protect strategic regions and foster economic growth.[130] In order to strengthen his own political

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[127]Interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998 and *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

[128]Temple, "Notes on the History of Kano", 56.

[129]By this period, the most important Fulani clan leaders had died, or were simply too old to present much of a threat to Dabo, including Jamau, Malam Bakatsine, and Mandikko.

[130]See John Philips, "Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate: Selected Studies, 1804-1903" (Ph.D. Dissertation, unpublished, UCLA, 1992) and Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, "A Study of

position, Dabo strengthened the authority of the emirship itself. A key part of this political centralization was the revival of royal slave titles, coupled with the revival of the symbolic manifestations of kingly authority.

Faced with empty coffers, a deserted palace and a hostile aristocracy, Dabo turned to individuals he could trust and who had extensive knowledge of the Hausa political system and culture: Alwali's former royal slaves. He could trust these slaves because he is said to have had a relationship with one of them, Barka, long before the *jihad*. It was Barka, then, who secured the suppport of the rest of the palace slave community. Likewise, these royal slaves would have otherwise been isolated from the power and wealth to which they had become accustomed. They had two options: remain outside the palace and risk being reduced to poverty, or show the new rulers how badly they were needed and how closely they could be trusted. The royal slaves Dabo relied upon for advice and political support were *Shamaki* Nasamu and *Dan Rimi* Barka.[131] These slaves had long served as the conduits for sensitive information and were accustomed to handling the often troublesome free-born aristocracy. Furthermore, unlike the Hausa free-born aristocracy, their titles and positions had not been usurped by the Fulani elite. Barka advised Dabo to reinstate the slave titles and Hausa forms of kingly authority.[132] As indicated above, these

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the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809-1903) (Ph.D. Dissertation, unpublished, Indiana University, 1985).

[131]Interviews with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu, 7 June 1996 and *Mai Unguwar Kutumbawa* Abubakar, 10 August 1996. See also Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar*, 50.

[132]Interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998 and Karibullahi Muhammadu Nasiru Kabara, 29 March 1998. M. G. Smith makes no

methods were not un-Islamic; indeed, they were tied to the political development of many Islamic states. Dabo recognized that he could not govern Kano without the royal slave community. Certainly, Barka himself emphasized that the only way Kano would be governable was if they adopted some of the *Habe* methods of kingship and rulership.[133] Soon thereafter, Dabo wrote for permission from Sokoto to officially and formally revive the title-holding system of the conquered *Habe* kings.[134] Bello agreed. He also gave permission for the emir to sit on an elevated throne, to wear ostrich feather sandals, hold a double-headed spear, and maintain a retinue of personal guards.[135] Dabo must have seen how royal slaves could be used to counter the influence of the Fulani nobles who were threatening his position. However, royal slaves had their own aims and interests in this process, and the evolution of the institution throughout the nineteenth century reflected their attempts to solidify and maintain a position in Kano officialdom. Suleiman's Imamate gave way to Dabo's centralization of power and royal slaves regained their official positions they had held long before 1807. Kano officialdom evolved as a means to manage daily demands of rulership and administration under the

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mention of Barka in this context. Instead, he argues that it was Dan Mama, Alwali's former *Ciroma*, who advised Dabo. Dan Mama was certainly an important part of Dabo's government, which further suggests to importance of Hausa political advisors during the early part of the nineteenth century. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 227. Fika records a similar tradition, see Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 1882-1940*, 18.

[133]Interview with *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

[134]Interviews with *Dan Masinin Kano* Maitama Sule, 28 January 1996, Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996 and *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996. See also Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano Ta Dabo Cigari*, 54.

[135]Interview with *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996. This is also examined in the secondary literature, see especially: Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," Smith, *Government in Kano* and Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule.*

aegis of Islamic law and government. As with Muhammad Rumfa, the reliance on royal slaves also concentrated power in the hands of the emir. The evolution of a "Sultanate" became more pronounced as the nineteenth century progressed, culminating with Yusufu's and Aliyu's seizure of power in the Kano Civil War (1893-1895) that was aided and supported by much of the royal slave palace community.[136] This evolution can only be understood by examining the dynamics of the royal slave system and Islamic government.

The transition from the *Habe* regime was accomplished and mediated by royal slaves, many of whom had been slaves of Alwali. In particular, oral data suggests that the titles of *shamaki* and *dan rimi* were inherited from the *Habe* regime.[137] Although *post*-jihad government in Kano has generally been labelled "Fulani," many of the occupants of the palace were not Fulani. To speak of a "Fulani" government is only possible in the sense that people who were defined by others and themselves as "Fulani" comprised the free-born ruling class after 1807. This elite intermarried extensively with the royal slave community and many persons of Hausa descent. Thus, to impose a rigid dichtomomy between Hausa and Fulani obscures the porous nature of ethnicity: ethnic distinctions could be blurred and mediated by a variety of political, religious and social insitutions.[138]

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[136]On the civil war and "sultanism", See M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 339-386 and Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule* and Chapter Five.

[137]Interviews with *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996, Magajin Mallam, 10 July 1996, *Mai Unguwar Kutumbawa* Abubakar, 10 August 1996.

[138]For an introduction, see Leroy Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in South and Central Africa: Essays on the Political Economy of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

Certainly, being Fulani was an important component of the ruling elite's identity, but the articulation of this identity did not necessarily result in a wholesale and radical re-interpretation of Kano political culture. The jihadists' re-interpretation of Islam and government was part of this transition. However, such theories were not entirely contrary to political culture in Kano. The oral traditions about Barka[139] in particular suggest that he was a transitional figure between the pre and post *jihad* regimes, and that royal slaves played an important role in the development of palace political culture and structures during the nineteenth century. In these traditions, he personifies the revival of *Habe* political symbols and forms placed in the service of jihadist Islamic tradition and values. While many traditions acknowledge that Barka was a former slave of Alwali, he is also uniformly remembered as a pious Muslim and scholar. According to one tradition, Barka and Dabo went together to collect the jihadist's flag from Sokoto, which although clearly untrue,[140] provides Barka with specifically *jihadist* Islamic credentials and emphasizes his place in the Islamic tradition the jihadists were in the process of developing. Thus, the revival of royal slave titles initiated by Barka and Dabo was an outgrowth of jihdadist government in Kano. Barka and Dabo supposedly studied together at an Islamic school, under Malam Dando,

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[139]For more detail about Barka's history and career, see Chapter Two.

[140]See interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 June 1996: "Rimawa are those who hold the Flag of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. That is why you will find Malams in the house of *Dan Rimi*." Clapperton noted that the flags of the jihadists were carried by men without honour, or, slaves.

a renowned scholar in Bida,[141] as well as at a school in Agades.[142] While in Bida, Barka and Dabo are said to have met Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello, and Abdullahi in particular told Dabo that his wealth and fortune lay in the East. Thus, not only is Barka associated with Islamic learning and scholarship, but also with the progress and prosecution of the jihad. Barka also told Dabo that whenever he came to Kano he would assume all of Dabo's responsibilities, reflecting the role and position royal slaves would come to occupy in the nineteenth century. Another tradition relates that after Dabo was turbaned in 1819, he was said to have travelled to Sokoto with Nasamu, who became *Shamaki*, and Barka. At Sokoto, Dabo introduced the two slaves to Usman dan Fodio by saying: "These are prisoners of war I have brought with me in order for them to greet you."[143] The Shehu then told Barka that "he will be blessed and prosper."[144] The son of Shamaki Nasamu, Hajjo, also met the Shehu. Hajjo became an important malam who advised both Usman Maje Ringim and Abdullahi Maje Karofi on Shari'a cases. Barka, Nasamu and Hajjo thus became part of Islamic tradition and government as articulated by the Kano jihadists. Their positions and personalities were sanctioned by the jihadist leaders. Even Abdullahi dan Fodio supposedly acknowledged the importance of these individuals for the

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[141]Bida was actually founded in 1857. See M. Mason, "Production, Penetration and Political Formation: The Bida State, 1857-1901" in Donald Crummey and C.C. Stewart (eds.), *Modes of Production in Africa: The Precolonial Era* (London: Sage Publications, 1981) and M. Mason, *Foundation of Bida Emirate* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1981).

[142]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.

[143]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

[144]*Ibid.*

future of Kano Emirate. Like the adoption of Hausa titles, the jihadists legitimized the use of royal slaves by emphasizing their value to Islam and Islamic nature of the institution itself. By tying Barka, Nasamu and Hajjo to an Islamic tradition, the revival of royal slave titles was made Islamically proper and justifiable.

Because Barka and Nasamu possessed information about palace life, politics and history to which few others would have been privy, they were able to advise Dabo about the methods and manner best used to re-introduce a number of Hausa customs and traditions to the court. According to Alhaji Abba Sadauki, a descendent of Barka:

> Dabo became the Emir of Kano and the friends of Dabo and his relatives some of them who were in Zaria said that since you [Dabo] became Emir you should take the responsibility of Ibrahim Barka, bring him close to you because Ibrahim Barka knew the art of public administration and he was going to teach Dabo how to rule effectively.[145]

After c. 1819, the authority and position of emir became more firmly associated with Hausa symbols of authority and kingship. Barka was reputed to have brokered a compromise between the jihadist and *Habe* forces that stopped further bloodshed in Kano.[146] This symbolizes Barka's important place in mediating the shift from the *Habe* regime to the Fulani one. During the reign of Ibrahim Dabo, the court began to resemble the pre-jihad court of the *Habe* rulers. This trend continued in the nineteenth century. After visiting Kano in 1889, Paul Staudinger remarked: "At the court of the lord of Kano great pomp prevails. The

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[145]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.
[146]*Ibid.*

original simplicity of the reigning Fulbe has disappeared and a strict code of protocol makes it difficult for subjects to approach their ruler."[147] Dabo reinstated the high throne used by the *Habe* rulers, and all the Emirate officials were required to prostrate themselves before it, a policy that was enforced by the royal slaves: "The Emir sat on a throne guarded by slave officials while all the counselors prostrated on the floor forming a line on either side of the throne."[148] The use of royal slaves was intimately tied to powerful kingship. They visually represented his influence and singularity in relation to the rest of the aristocracy. They also literally secured his place and position on the throne.

Ibrahim Dabo and the following emirs used the *bayin sarki* to strengthen their political position and to balance the power of the free-born aristocracy, as had their *Habe* predecessors. The use of royal slaves was also tied to Islamic government.[149] They allowed Dabo to guard the jihadist state from possible ruin at the hands of highly factionalized politics and rivalries. However, they also ensured that Dabo and his successors would dominate the emirship. When the leading Fulani clan-leaders suggested that a rotating emirship be established, Barka intervened and arranged to have Ibrahim Dabo's daughters marry the *Makama, Madaki, Sarkin Dawaki Mai Tuta,* and *Sarkin*

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[147]Paul Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer* (*In the Heart of the Hausa States, volumes I and II*, translated by Johanna E. Moody (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990- originally published in 1889), I, 230-231. See also M. Hiskett, "Song of Bagauda" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (27), 1964, 119: "During his time there was pomp and plenty."

[148]A. A. Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari*, cited by Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," 170.

[149]This point was in general emphasized by Karibullahi Muhammadu Nasiru Kabara, see interview of: 29 March 1998.

Bai as a means to limit competition to the throne by tying these officials more closely to Dabo's own family.[150] Barka was far enough removed from the "politics of lineage" that he was able to broker such arrangements. Likewise, Dabo's revival of the *Tara ta Kano*, an institution dating from the time of *Sarkin Kano* Muhammad Rumfa, was also a means to ensure that Dabo's lineage would dominate the emirship. Four of the nine officials on the *Tara ta Kano* (the *madaki, makama, sarkin bai* and *sarkin dawaki mai tuta*) acted as an electoral council, and were therefore ineligible to succeed to the emirship. Thus, Dabo prevented the leaders of the Jobawa, Yolawa and Dambazawa clans from gaining access to the emirship. In so doing, Dabo secured the succession for his own sons.

While Dabo appropriated *Habe* offices, he also revised their meaning, status and nature.[151] The four main types of titled offices were: royal titles, clan-territorial titles, malamships/judicial titles and slave titles. Some former slave titles were given to free men. Dabo appointed members of the royal family and free clients to offices like *galadima, ciroma, sarkin shanu, barde, wambai* and *sarkin bai.* The title of *madaki* went to the Yolawa clan, *makama* to Jobawa, *sarkin bai* to Dambazawa, and *sarkin dawaki mai tuta* to the Danejawa clan. Most of the remaining titles went to the Emir's kinsmen.[152]

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[150]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alahji Abba Sadauki, 29-30 March 1998 See also Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 397. Ibrahim Dabo's daughter Kumboto was married to *Madaki* Umaru; Fadimatu was married to *Sarkin Bai* Dabo Dambazau.

[151]Interview with *Mai Unguwar Kutumbawa* Abubakar, 10 August 1996.

[152]See Fika, 33, who lists each titled position and whether it was filled by royal Sullubawa, a royal client or by a clan.

Like the previous *Habe* rulers, Dabo used and manipulated the distribution of titled offices to strengthen his own position on the throne by appointing his clients and supporters to important positions. All title holders in theory became agents of the emir and *hakimai*, or officers of the state. [153] When official vacancies occurred due to death or deposition, Dabo then appointed people he could trust and who would ensure that the succession passed to one of his sons.[154] For example, Dabo appointed his son, Kwairanga, to the office of *ciroma*; he made his eldest, Usman, *tafida*; Abdusalame, another son, was made *dan isa*; he made *wambai* a free title and then appointed his younger brother Haruna to the office. The "officialdom" that developed out of Dabo's reforms was constructed in the language and ideology of lineage and family relationships. The relationships between office-holders were mediated through lineage relationships. To whom one was related became extremely important in determining the constellations of power and influence inside the Kano court. Corporate groups composed of relations and clients became associated with certain titles. As individuals within lineages competed for titles by securing corporate support for their claims, these corporate groups also developed alliances and competed against one another to secure titles and influential positions in the official hierarchy. Indeed, this was

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[153]Fika, 19-20 is mistaken about the titles that were in existence during the reign of Dabo. The term *hakimi* likely originates from the Arabic word *hakama* meaning "to rule", or *hakim* meaning "ruler." See Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 288.

[154]The "dynastic" style of Dabo's reign was reiterated by many informants. See interview with Karibullahi Muhammadu Nasiru Kabara, 29 March 1998. The city malams did not have a good relationship with Suleiman, but did with Dabo, suggesting an attempt to court a wider cross-section of the Islamic community in Kano.

the reason royal slaves were initially so useful to Ibrahim Dabo and his successors. Unlike free officials, who had access to networks of relationships by birth and marriage which helped them to gain and secure their official positions, royal slaves were dependent for elevation on the emir, who in turn was able to dismiss difficult royal slaves in a manner impossible among the free-born aristocracy.

Conclusion

Islam as an abstract concept cannot be isolated as the single explanation for the use of royal slaves. Rather, Islam encouraged the development of a particular kind of politics - government by the royal household - and offered an "ideal" Islamic model for governance which often resulted in the reliance on royal slaves. In addition, the local context was clearly vital to the adoption of royal slavery in Kano. The difficulties the jihadists had consolidating their administration led to the incorporation of pre-existing political structures. Slaves were useful officials because they were subject to violence and coercion emanating from their status as slaves and socially isolated "outsiders." Over time, however, royal slaves developed the means to resist this coercion.

Ibrahim Dabo presided over the consolidation of the system and introduced reforms (on the advice of individual royal slaves) that effectively institutionalized the royal slave system. Individual slaves assumed official titles. This was a response to both the pressures

Islam as a religion generated and to the existence of the *Habe* system of slave offices. These were not static, but were flexible political offices that changed along with individuals and historical circumstances. This dynamic replicated a pattern found throughout the Islamic world.[155] Like the Ottoman Empire and Mamluk Egypt, the system of titles and title-holding was informal, personalized and patrimonial. The ruler promoted slaves he could trust and with whom he had developed close relationships. The principles upon which the system was based were also similar: recruitment through slavery, conversion to Islam, training in households and palace schools, all leading to the eventual accession to titles and corresponding levels of influence. As elsewhere, the reasons for their use and the ways in which they were used were the products of an interaction between Islamic government, customary practice, and the internal dynamics of the royal slave system which developed over the course of the nineteenth century. By focusing on the history of individual slaves in the palace, the next Chapter explores the the actual practice of royal slavery as it evolved into a formal political system.

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[155]See, for example, Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol I.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); David Ayalon, *The Mamluk Military Society: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979); Halil Inalcik with Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Chapter Two

The Paths to Power:
Royal Slave Titles Under Dabo and His Successors in Kano Emirate

The Emir's slaves prefer to remain in slavery than gaining their freedom, because when they remain with the Emir, they will wear expensive clothes, eat the food they like, and confiscate property.[1]

Introduction

This chapter examines the names, functions, origins and positions of slave offices, as well as the lives and biographies of important royal slaves from the reign of Dabo on. The careers of slave title-holders is documented, including the general methods of royal slave recruitment and promotion, their role in the administration of the state and the nature of their relationship with the emir and the royal household. Under Emir Suleiman slaves did not initially occupy formal positions. However, Dabo's revival of royal slave titles regularized their participation in government and administration. He relied on a select contingent of royal slaves, and as noted previously, some had served under the last *Habe* King, Alwali. Others were his own personal slaves who had not held titles during the *Habe* period. Both groups of slaves helped Dabo establish the Sullubawa dynasty in Kano, as different members of the slave community later helped Abdullahi Maje Karofi entrench his patrimonial control of government. Political and

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[1]Interview with M. Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

economic patronage was dispensed from the emir's household, and served as a means to secure the loyalty of the entire royal slave community. Access to patronage networks allowed royal slaves to establish and develop their own households, which were in effect political and social extensions of the emir's household. As part of this process, royal slaves developed their own means of acquiring wealth, generally by manipulating their preferential access to the emir.

The number and importance of royal slaves increased over the course of the nineteenth century. They were used as elite military units, and their duties with regard to the administration of agricultural estates and the collection of taxes expanded. In short, as the state's dependence on slave labour grew so did the demand for elite slaves. The patterns of title-holding explored below indicate that depositions were extremely common in Kano. As new emirs came to power, they promoted and advanced slaves they could trust, based on personal, family and household ties. Furthermore, entry into the hierarchy, and promotion to higher positions, was often accomplished by succeeding on the battlefield. Many of the slaves discussed below had been successful warriors before they assumed senior slave titles. Once they assumed titles, they formally commanded units of slave soldiers, and by the reign of Maje Karofi, slave bodyguards. Finally, the "kofa" or "gate" system which channeled political information through three slave "gates" was revived and reformulated This was a central feature of the Kano *mamluk* system throughout the nineteenth century.

Royal Slave Officialdom in the Nineteenth Century

The four main spheres of royal slave provenance in Kano Emirate were: (1) the supervision of palace custom and etiquette; (2) military service; (3) the administration of the Emirate and territorial supervision; and (4) duties concerned with the distribution of food and palace upkeep. In general, royal slaves lived in the palace and served the emir as administrators, personal retainers and guards. Those working outside the palace supervised slave labour on plantations. During and after the reign of Ibrahim Dabo, royal slaves in Kano held a series of specific titles which gave them access to power and privilege independent of the free-born aristocracy. The community grew gradually until the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi, when the number of titles and slaves was substantially enlarged. This process consummated in the reign of Aliyu Babba, who expanded his personal control of government by enlarging his own household, and by vesting dependent members of his household with important positions in the slave hierarchy.

Throughout the nineteenth century the *shamaki, dan rimi* and *sallama* were the most senior slave titles. The persons who held these titles were recognized as the most important royal slave officials in Kano. They lived in or near the palace, and headed the entire palace slave establishment. The *sallama's* compound was located at Rimin Kira, to the northeast of the palace, close to the metal-working operations he supervised. The *shamaki* and *dan rimi* both lived inside the northern

section of the palace in separate households.[2] Some oral data relates that the title of *sallama*, which was initially held by eunuchs, was first created during the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi. Other sources maintain that the title was inherited from the previous *Habe* regime. M.G. Smith argues that the title of *sallama* was "likely" revived by *Sarkin Kano* Ibrahim Dabo after he conferred the title of *turakin romo* on Gazare and *turakin manya* on Gamdi.[3] The most likely explanation is that the title of *sallama* existed before the jihad, and was formally revived sometime in the reign of Ibrahim Dabo or Abdullahi Maje Karofi. Regardless, eunuchs were definitely used during and after the reigns of Suleiman and Dabo. The author of "Notes on the History of Kano" states that Suleiman made a eunuch named Abu *wombai*; another named Inusa was appointed *sarkin shanu*, and still another named Gorkori was made *dan amar*.[4] Oral informants remembered none of these individuals and uniformly emphasized that no formal slave titles were employed until the time of Ibrahim Dabo. It seems likely, therefore, that these eunuchs were used by Suleiman as personal servants, and were not formally titled state functionaries, who were only placed in these positions by Dabo. Over the course of the

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[2]Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power," 90-127.

[3]M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 235. According to British colonial sources, during the *Habe* period the *turkakin romo* was "always held by a slave or freedman of the Hausa Emirs." It appears, however, that the first Fulani *turakin romo* was not a slave, but a free Fulani named Husseni, whose mother was the daughter of Bu'a, the first village head of Minjibir, who was in turn the grandson of Gawa, the eighteenth century Fulani founding father of Minjibir. See HCB Acc. 70-20 vol. I, Minjibir District Inspection Notes.

[4]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 55. Muhammad b. Salih notes that Suleiman's servants were the *Wombai* Jubo, Mainasara and the *Sarkin Bai*. The titles of *wombai* and *sarkin bai* were normally reserved for eunuchs during the *Habe* period. See Salih, *Taqyid al-Akhbar*, 45. The *Kano Chronicle* makes no mention of these titles or persons during the reign of Suleiman.

nineteenth century eunuchs became less important in the government and administration of Kano.[5] This was possibly a result of the increasing coherence of royal slave communal identity, family and kinship groups during the period. Other important slave titles in the nineteenth century included *sarkin dogarai* [chief of the bodyguards], *kasheka, turakin soro, makaman dan rimi, dan sarai, jakadan garko, shettima* and *mabudi.* These titles were created or revived between 1819-1926. Some, like *hauni, kilishi,* and *san kurmi* were initially occupied by free officials, and were later transformed into slaves offices. The chart below lists the major slave titles of nineteenth century Kano, and the date or emir when they first came into use as *slave* titles.

Major Royal Slave Titles in Nineteenth Century Kano

Title	*Emir/Date of First Use*
Shamaki	Ibrahim Dabo c. 1819
Dan Rimi	Ibrahim Dabo
Kasheka	Ibrahim Dabo
Turakin Soro	Ibrahim Dabo
Sarkin Hatsi	Ibrahim Dabo
Sarkin Dogarai	Ibrahim Dabo [made a slave title by Abdullahi]
Jakadan Garko	Usman-Abdullahi c. 1846
Sallama	Abdullahi Maje Karofi c. 1855
Dan Sarai	Abdullahi
San Kurmi	Abdullahi
Hauni	Abdullahi
Mabudi	Abdullahi
Galadiman Rumbu	Abdullahi
Kilishi	Muhammad Bello-Aliyu c. 1882
Maja Sirdi	Aliyu-Abbas c. 1893/94
Shettima	Aliyu
Mai Tafari	Usman II c. 1919

Each slave title-holder had his own subordinates, both titled and untitled. Generally, lesser subordinates had titles derivative of the

[5]Nast, "Space, History and Power," 96.

senior slave in charge of them; for example, *ciroman shamaki* [the *ciroma* of the *shamaki*] or *madakin dan rimi* [the *madaki* of the *dan rimi*]. The three most powerful royal slaves were allowed to create titles for their own clients and subordinates, and could thus expand their own influence by appointing clients or family members to the new offices. The emir, however, retained control over appointments to the senior slave positions, while the senior slaves were allowed to appoint their lesser subordinates as they wished.[6] In practice the status and function of offices varied substantially, depending on the abilities and ambitions of the individuals who occupied the titles. There was no permanent, rigid status order amongst royal slave title-holders. The entire system functioned to allow individuals to assume more influence and take on other responsibilities as their personalities and abilities dictated. As Mustapha, the current *makaman dan rimi*, emphasized:

> . . . physically the *shamaki* is the highest, but sincerely speaking the highest in the hierarchy depends on the one favoured by the Emir . . . it happened there was a *dan rimi* called *Dan Rimi* Mamman who became more popular than *shamaki*. It only depends on how much the Emir trusted you. If the Emir trusted the *dan rimi* more than the *shamaki* then the *dan rimi* would become higher.[7]

The system was fluid: there was no regular order of promotion, nor was the system bureaucratized to any great extent. Duties changed and evolved over time. Slave title-holders attempted to incorporate

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[6]Interviews with *Madakin Dan Rimi* Umaru, 17 August 1996, *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996 and *Sarkin Zage* Mohammad Bashir, 13 August 1996.
[7]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha Abubakar Yakubu, 28 February 1996.

new functions into their offices in order to enhance their own positions and power.[8] The ability of a title-holder to expand his work depended on the degree of trust between the title-holder in question and the person who appointed him. New or untried title-holders were generally kept from extending their positions, as were those who seemed too powerful.[9] Thus, the system as established by Dabo encouraged flexibility and change as circumstances dictated.

The main sources of royal slaves in nineteenth-century Kano were Ningi, Nupe, Damagaram, Adamawa and Borno.[10] Eunuchs were generally captured in warfare or obtained through trade. Most came from Damagaram, Nupe or Borno. However, some informants claimed that in the past emirs would cut off the genitals of slaves in Kano.[11] Enslavement was justified by Islam and interpreted according to an Islamic frame of reference.[12] In theory, only non-Muslims could be enslaved. Slave owners were enjoined to treat their slaves well and to manumit them frequently. The practice of slavery differed from its

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[8]Interviews with *Maja Sirdi* Ibrahim, 9 August 1996, *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru, 20 August 1996, *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 2 August 1996; and Ilu Figini, 17 July 1996.

[9]Interviews with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 2 August 1996, *Sarkin Dogarai* Hassan, 22 November 1995, *Maja Sirdi* Ibrahim, 9 August 1996, Alhaji Kabiru, 20 August 1996.

[10]Interviews with Halilu Ibrahim, 2 August 1975, *Umar Collection*, Malam Zubairu, 11 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, Sa'adu Dogari, 23 August 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and *Sallaman* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, who also notes slaves were taken from Katagum and Gombe. See also Charles Henry Robinson, *Hausaland or Fifteen Hundred Miles Through the Central Sudan* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Co, 1896), 130-131: "During our stay in Kano about a thousand slaves were brought into town on a single occasion as the result of such an expedition." Adamawa became an increasingly important source of slaves, see Philip Burnham, "Raiders and Traders in Adamawa: Slavery as a Regional System" in James L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 43-72.

[11]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also Pearce Gervis, *Of Emirs and Pagans* (London: Cassel, 1956), 56.

[12]See Paul E. Lovejoy, "Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate," 208.

ideology, however. Slaves were beaten, executed and sold. Even the rights of second generation slaves, who were supposed to be granted nominal membership in the community, were ignored if economic or political necessity dictated such behavior.[13]

The ideal royal slave was young, generally not older than ten or twelve, who could be acculturated and adopted as members of existing royal slave households. By Islamic law, the state had a right to one-fifth of all persons captured in war, although in practice the percentage was closer to one-half and most slaves thus captured became the property of the emir.[14] William Wallace, who travelled through Hausaland in the late nineteenth century, argued that enslavement through warfare had long been a common practice: "[slaves were] being continually recruited from the wholly pagan races who live in the mountainous regions that lie within easy raiding distance from the capitals of most provinces. Each Emir has his own preserves, on which his neighbour is not supposed to encroach."[15] The emir owned all of his royal slaves. They belonged to the emirship and were passed down to successive emirs as possessions.[16] Individual warriors were

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[13]In general see *ibid.*, 215-222.

[14]On warfare and slave supply, see Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, I, 527 and II, 367, 379 and 394.

[15]William Wallace, "Notes on a Journey Through the Sokoto Empire and Borgu in 1894" in *Geographical Journal* VIII, 3 (1896), 217. C.H. Robinson, who visited Kano during the Civil War, further commented that a large number of slaves were taken "not from foreign or outside sources, but from villages and towns the inhabitants of which are the same tribe and race as their captors." See Charles Henry Robinson, "Hausaland," 129. Robinson wrote this passage during the Kano Civil War, and his description is likely to be correct, as both sides enslaved and executed captives.

[16]Interviews with Muhammadu Rabi'u, 13 August 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, Alhaji Isaku, 6 August 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, and *Sarkin Shanu* Muhamadu Mansur, 7 June 1996 The Emir's prerogatives and responsibilities in regard to his royal slaves are examined in Chapter Five.

also allowed to retain a portion for themselves. Regardless of the precise number, it is clear that the state, and officials serving the state, garnered the vast majority of their slaves through wars and raids. Imam Imoru, a historian and scholar who was born in 1858 and lived in Hausaland until 1891, later recorded that:

> There are slave owners in Hausaland who have purchased 100 or 200 slaves, and there are some slave owners with 400 or 500 slaves. But, in my lifetime, I have heard of only one person who was not an official, who had 1,000 slaves in Kano . . . In Hausaland, commoners buy slaves, but they are unable to buy more than 1,000 of them. Officials have more than 1,000 because they do not buy them: they seize them during war campaigns.[17]

The emir decided which war captives he would keep and which he would distribute among his retainers after listening to the advice of his favourite slaves, often the *shamaki.* Furthermore, a certain number of slaves captured by slave dealers were sent to the emir's palace, where they were examined by senior members of the royal slave community. Speaking in general about the nineteenth century, Gwadabe Madaki Dogari noted that royal slaves decided which slaves would be taken to the emir, who would then decide whether to purchase them. After the emir made his decision, the *shamaki* bought them using cowries, then the *dan rimi* or *sallama* would physically take the payment to the slave

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[17]Douglas Edwin Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland Being a Description by Imam Imoru of the Land, Economy, and Society of his People" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973), 233. While in Adamawa, Barth noted that ownership of slaves was widespread and some private individuals owned as many as 1,000 slaves. Likewise, some "head slaves" had "as many as a thousand slaves each under their command, with whom they undertake occasional expeditions for their masters." See Barth, *Travels and Discoveries,* II, 190-191. On Kano, see Heinrich Barth, *ibid.*, I, 570.

dealer.[18] Of course, the slaves involved in this process changed over the course of the nineteenth century. As new emirs came to power, new slaves assumed control of the slave supply and distribution system. Likewise, in 1975, Malam Muhammadu noted that slaves were both captured as by-product of warfare and brought by merchants from Adamawa for sale in Kano. They were distributed at the palace "like goats."[19] Many others were sold at Kurmi market, lined up and shackled, where slave brokers would praise their qualities, related to strength and ability to work, sometimes their heads were shaved or covered with gray ashes.[20]

The emir and the senior slaves distributed the new slaves to other slave officials, followers, or free-born titled officials. The emir also kept attractive female slaves for his harem. Most of the slaves who entered the palace distribution system were sent to work as labourers on the emir's *gandaye*. The younger the captive the better chance he had of remaining inside the palace establishment. Some older slaves were sent as gifts from other emirs or rulers. These slaves already had skills and were highly valued as a result. Isa, the *shamaki* during much of Emir Usman's reign (1846-1855) came to Kano in this manner. The lucky few recently captured slaves who were kept in the palace were initially assigned menial jobs to perform, such as repairing the palace walls or sweeping out the emir's stables. Hundreds of slaves

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[18]Interview with Gwadabe Maidawaki Dogari and three of the Emir's slaves, 11 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also interviews with Garba Jika, 19 June 1975, *Musa Collection* and M. Hamza, 18-23 July 1975, *Umar Collection*.

[19]Interview with Malam Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 497.

[20]Interview with Malam Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*.

lived and worked in the palace and the vast majority never moved beyond these most menial and basic of jobs. If they showed promise, ability and loyalty, they could acquire positions of increasing responsibility and possibly even a titled slave office. These first steps in a slave career were extremely important. Because the senior slaves were given significant latitude in the appointment of junior slaves they generally chose to promote persons from their own households to serve under them as their direct subordinates or *lawani*. However, only the emir could appoint slaves to the positions not directly subordinate to the three senior slaves, including the titles of *sarkin hatsi, sarkin dogarai, kasheka, kilishi, mabudi* and *jakadan garko*. Likewise, the emir appointed slaves to the positions of *dan rimi, shamaki* and *sallama*. It was therefore vital that first-generation slaves attract the patronage of a senior slave or the notice of the emir. Whereas slaves born inside the palace were born into pre-existing slave household networks, first-generation slaves initially had much less corporate support.

After a slave held a number of junior, untitled posts, he would be promoted to a titled position directly under the senior slave in whose household the junior slave had been raised. The junior slave was usually given a title derivative of his superior, such as *barden shamaki* (the "barde" of the "shamaki") for instance. After spending a number of years in this capacity, the slave could then be promoted by the emir to a more senior post, where he would command his own staff and household. While the paths slaves took through the hierarchy varied from person to person, they were promoted on two main bases: the

quality of their relationship with a patron (both senior slaves and the emir) and by merit. The emir and senior slaves would only appoint a person who could do the job. Before promotion, therefore, a slave had to demonstrate a significant level of achievement in his former positions and that he possessed the required level of ability for the next office. It was most usual for slaves to gain skills over time in a few fields: animal husbandry, food and plantation management, palace etiquette or the military and to then be promoted to positions where their abilities could be best used and further developed.[21] The emirs also had favourite slaves. Often these were slaves with whom they had played as children. Because the emir appointed slaves to the most senior titles, his approval and trust were necessary to reach these positions. There was no single "route" to influence and it was therefore possible for the emir and his senior slaves to promote younger slaves in a variety of ways. Allah Bar Sarki (*dan rimi* c. 1903/4-1908), for example, first worked in variety of positions involved with the management of the palace food supply. He was eventually promoted to the senior office in charge of the palace grains (the *sarkin hatsi*). He was later promoted to the office of *dan rimi* mainly as a result of his close relationship with Emir Abbas. This was indeed the general pattern: the occupants of the highest offices had their own close relationship with the emir to thank for their positions. Finally, movement through the ranks for all slaves was facilitated by success

[21]This process will be further explored in Chapter Four.

on the battlefield, where it was possible to attract the attention of the emir for deeds of great bravery.

> Even if you did not capture but you went to the place and struggled without getting killed then you would be recognised as a courageous person and would be given a horse in recognition of your prowess. If before that time your master was looking at you as a coward he would henceforth stop. As from that time he would be treating you as a brave person and you could even be taken to see the emir.[22]

The royal slave system functioned so effectively because captured slaves were placed in an entirely new social environment and were isolated from their communities, friends, and families. Many palace slaves were also taught Islam and were expected to convert.[23] For this reason, Qur'anic schools were constructed in the palace specifically for royal slaves.[24] Slaves attended the Islamic school located at *kofar kwaru*, in the northern slave section of the palace. In 1975 the *Sallama* Dako stated that before the arrival of the Europeans "they [royal slaves] were taught, you know that the Kwaru gate was a preacher's house called Zuwa'i. He was teaching and was a senior teacher [Malam]."[25] According to palace traditions recorded by Husaini

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[22]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[23]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[24]Interviews with *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996, *Alkali* Husaini Sufi, 12 August 1996, *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996, and Wada Dako, 21 February 1998. See also Nast, "Space, History and Power." According to one oral informant, many slaves were taught Islam. The master of a slave would say: "You ought to embrace the Islamic Faith" and the slave responded "Yes, father, I would personally wish to pray" The master would then teach the slave how to pray and introduce him to the faith. "He will bathe and [be] taught [the rituals of] ablution and prayer. He has thus become a Muslim." Of course, this was an ideal and did not always occur in practice. See interview with Malam Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[25]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also interview with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

Sufi, the school at *Kofar Kwaru* was established during the reign of Ibrahim Dabo. Nuhu, *Dan Rimi* 1894-1903/04, was among the first students of the school.[26] For masters, the isolation of new slaves eased the process of integration into the palace community, while the slaves born into slavery [Hausa: *cucanawa*] were already socialized to be a part of the slave community, and valued their high status in relation to first generation slaves.[27]

Although some informants stated that royal slaves could actually own other slaves, this is inaccurate. Slaves could not own other slaves.[28] They could not sell the slaves who worked under them, for instance. The most powerful royal slaves did, however, supervise their subordinates and were given wide latitude in dealing with them by the emir. These slaves legally belonged to the emir. From the perspective of regular slaves, it may have appeared that the *shamaki, dan rimi,* and *sallama* owned their subordinates, indicating just how far removed some royal slaves were from their counterparts working on plantations or in more menial jobs in Kano.[29]

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[26]See also Husaini Sufi, *Mu san Kammu* (Kano: Mai-Nasara Press, 1993), 51-55.

[27]See Chapter Three. On the higher status of second generation slaves in general, see Jack Goody, "Slavery in Time and Space" in James L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, 18-19.

[28]See interview with Karibullahi Muhammadu Nasiru Kabara, 29 March 1998.

[29]Interview with Alhahji Isyaku, 6 August 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also interviews with M. Idrisu Danmaiso, 7 August 1975., *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and Hauwa, 11 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also The Arnett Papers, *Rhodes House Library*, Mss Afr s. 953/2-3, Arnett (August, 1925): "The royal slaves belonged either to the Emir or Chief or else to one of his head slaves."

Royal Slave Officials under Dabo and his Successors

Information about the names, origins and histories of the individuals who occupied the senior slave positions is most reliable from the reign of Ibrahim Dabo onward. The reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi is the most problematic in terms of establishing the individuals who occupied the senior slave posts. In this section, the occupants of the three major offices will be discussed in order to develop and examine patterns of change and continuity among individuals, slave families and titles over the course of the nineteenth century.

The title of *shamaki* was not passed down from father to son but was the subject of intense competition amongst pretenders throughout the royal slave community. Ibrahim Dabo appointed Nasamu as the first *shamaki* after the jihad. He was former slave of *Sarkin Kano* Alwali and effectively replaced Mohamma Jifa, who was Alwali's own *Shamaki* at the time of the Fulani conquest.[30] Nasamu was born outside Kano, possibly in Bagirmi.[31] He played a central role in the formulation and execution of Dabo's political program and policy of administrative centralization. Nasamu died in battle at Maradi, and was later replaced by a slave named Ahoda or Ibrahim, likely from Gaya.[32] Ahoda became extremely powerful and stayed in office until sometime during Usman's reign (1846-1855), when he was replaced by Isa, who

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[30]M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 214. See also Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar*, 50.
[31]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1-2 April 1998.
[32]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 235. See also interviews with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1 April 1998 and 2 April 1998, *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

was possibly another "Buzu."[33] According to *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, "Isa was given to Usman by the Emir of Damagaram."[34] Salih also noted that after "Shamaki Abdu [Ahoda] died he [Usman] appointed Isa to succeed him."[35] Isa was executed by Abdullahi Maje Karofi almost immediately upon his accession to the throne in 1855 because he was connected with another faction interested in coming to power.[36] Isa was replaced by Ibrahim Mai Gari, from Bebeji.[37] According to M.G. Smith, Mai Gari was a personal slave of Abdullahi, and survived for many years. He was eventually replaced by Ibrahim Mai Yaki, who formerly held the title of *ciroman shamaki*.[38] Ibrahim Mai Yaki remained in office until the early part of Mohammad Bello's reign (1882-1893), when he was deposed in favour of Sa'idu. Although M.G. Smith argues Mai Yaki was *shamaki*, it is possible this Mai Yaki was actually the *sallama* during Bello's reign. This would mean that Ibrahim Mai Gari survived until sometime in Bello's reign:

> Q: We were told that there were three *shamaki*: Ibrahim Manya, Ibrahim Mai Gari and Ibrahim Mai Yaki. A: No, it is all a lie. There was only one, Ibrahim Mai Gari who gave birth to thirty children and all attained adulthood. He lived with *Dan Rimi* Yahaya [*dan rimi*, c. 1883-1894]. *Dan Rimi* Yahaya was *dan rimi* and he [Ibrahim Mai Gari] was *shamaki*.[39]

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[33]A general appellation for a non-Muslim and non-Hausa person from the region in and around Damagaram.

[34]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 2 April 1998.

[35]Salih, *Taqyid al-ahkbar*, 58.

[36]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[37]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 275. My oral data included two other names, Ibrahim Manya and Amu. Ibrahim Manya possibly served under Usman, and Amu under Maje Karofi.

[38]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 275. See also Muhammad b. Salih, *Taqyid al-ahkbar*, 60.

[39]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

After Mai Gari or Mai Yaki's deposition or death, Sa'idu served as Bello's *shamaki*, and remained in office as *Sarkin Kano* Tukur's *shamaki* until his defeat in the Civil War. In c. 1893/4 Harisu was promoted by Yusufu to the position, and remained *shamaki* throughout Aliyu's reign until 1903 when the British conquered Kano. After the British installed Abbas, he appointed Ajuji to the office. In the meantime, Harisu returned to Kano from Sokoto and was given a house by Abbas. Ajuji died in c.1905/06, and Abbas gave the title for a second time to Harisu. Harisu died in 1910.[40] Finally, Salihi was appointed *shamaki* after Ajuji's death in c. 1910. Before he became Shamaki, Salihi held the position of *jakadan garko*.[41] Salihi stayed in office until the death of Emir Usman in 1925. He became extremely powerful during the reign of Usman, and was eventually exiled from Kano by the British in 1926.

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[40]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 442. He argues that Ajuji survived until 1910, when he died, and was then replaced by Harisu, who died soon thereafter.

[41]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 295 See interviews with *Shamakin Kano* Inuwa, 17 July 1996 and Ilu Figini, 17 July 1996 and *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

The Office of *Shamaki*, c. 1819-1926

Nasamu (Dabo)[42]
Ahoda or Ibrahim (Dabo-Usman)
Isa (Usman, executed by Abdullahi c. 1855)
Ibrahim Mai Gari (Abdullahi, c. 1855)
Ibrahim Mai Yaki (Abdullahi-Mohammad Bello, deposed c. 1883/4)
Sa'idu (Bello-Tukur, c. 1884-1894/5, deposed by Aliyu)
Harisu (Yusufu-Aliyu (c. 1894/5-1903)
Ajuji (Abbas c. 1903/04-1905/06)
Harisu (Abbas c. 1906-1910)
Salihi (Abbas-Usman c. 1910/11-1926)

The *sallama* was likely "officially" revived by Abdullahi Maje Karofi after 1855, although there were other slaves, notably the *kasheka*, who performed similar functions during Dabo's and Usman's reigns.[43] The *sallama* supervised the emir's other eunuchs, including the *turakin soro* and *kasheka*, although he was not always a eunuch himself. No one I interviewed was able to discuss the title of *sallama* in any depth before the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi. *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha even noted: "There was no *sallama* during [the reign of Ibrahim] Dabo. [Usman] Maje Ringim also had no *sallama*."[44] According to Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, Mageru and Rabo both held the title during the reign of Abdullahi.[45] They were eunuchs. According to Dako, the *Sallaman*

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[42]*The Kano Chronicle*, 131 and the Hausa version updated by Rupert East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu* vol II, 64, state that *Shamaki* "Naamu" or "Na-samu" served during the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi. Given his probable age this reference is likely to be an error.

[43]The oral data I collected about the title was partially compromised because I was not able to speak with the current *sallama*, who also serves as the emir's private secretary. I was denied an audience on five separate occasions. The current *sallama* succeeded his father, who died in late 1995, while I was in Kano. Nonetheless, I received information about the title and its occupants from a variety of sources, mainly title-holders currently associated with the palace.

[44]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 2 April 1998

[45]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

Kano in 1975,[46] a eunuch captured in Adamawa and brought to Kano by traders was purchased by Abdullahi Maje Karofi, and later inherited the title of *sallama* from a slave named "Ali."[47] These eunuchs were followed in office by Mai Yaki, who was the *sallama* under Mohammad Bello, and was not a eunuch.[48] In the *Kano Chronicle*, "Salama maiyaki" is mentioned as one of the many people who "found favour" during Bello's reign.[49] In *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu* East records that after Bello's death the three senior slaves were polled by the *Waziri* of Sokoto about their choice for the next emir. *Dan Rimi* Yahaya is mentioned by name and title, while *Shamaki* Sa'idu and *Sallama* Mai Yaki are mentioned only by name.[50] Mai Yaki was formally deposed by Aliyu and replaced by a slave named Barde.[51] It is possible that Mai Yaki was the same person as Barde, and thus continued in

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[46]Dako was the father of the current *sallama*. After the titles were banned in 1926, and the leading slave title-holders exiled, *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Bayero "unofficially" appointed individual slaves to lead the three main slave households. After Bayero's death, *Sarkin Kano* Sanusi recreated the slave titles, and appointed persons from slave households to hold the titles: Dan Indo, a personal slave of Abdullahi Bayero from Bichi, became *shamaki* and held the title between c. 1958 and 1982. After his death, Isyaku held the title until 1984, when the current *shamaki*, Inuwa, was appointed. Abin Fada became *sallama* during the reign of Sanusi, and was replaced by Dako at the beginning of Ado Bayero's reign. Muhammadu, a son of Allah Bar Sarki, became *dan rimi* until he died in 1980. Shehu held the title between 1980 and 1995, when the current *dan rimi*, also a son of Allah Bar Sarki, was appointed.

[47]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[48]Interviews with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1-2 April 1998 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996. .

[49]NAK O/AR10/2, *Kano Chronicle* MS, translated by John Hunwick.

[50]East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, Vol II, 66: "Sa'an nan Wazirin Sokkoto ya kirawo Dan-rimi Yahaya, da Sa'idu, da Malan Mayaki, da Galadima Tukur, ya shawarche su ya che, 'Tukur za a yi wa sarauta ko kuwa Yusufu.' "

[51]Barde and the two other senior slaves are also referred to by East. See *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, Vol II, 67: "Sai Kwairanga da Nuhu da barde da Harisu suka che da Babba, "Kai za mu nada." See also *ibid.*, 68: "A chikin bayi kuma aka yi wa Nuhu Dan-rimi, aka yi wa Harisu Shamaki, aka yi wa Barde Sallama, aka yi wa Shekarau Shatima, sarautar bayin sarki ke nan."

Aliyu's service for a very short time until he was killed in action against forces from Damagaram.[52]

> Q: Was there a *Sallama* Barde? A: It is the same as *Sallama* Mai Yaki. Some called him *Sallama* Barde and some Mai Yaki.[53]

However, given the fact that Aliyu generally deposed those who fought against him in the Civil War, it is more likely that Barde and Mai Yaki were indeed different persons. Jatau, a slave from Ningi, replaced Barde near the end of Aliyu's reign. Jatau died leading an attack against the British in 1903, and was very much associated with the defeat of Kano in 1903 by people currently living in the palace: "Jatau [his time in office] was during the coming of the British."[54] He was not a eunuch, and was the senior brother of Allah Bar Sarki, who became *dan rimi* under Abbas.[55] Thus, by the reign of Aliyu the system had changed: Jatau's personal tie to Aliyu ensured his appointment to the office of *sallama*, regardless of whether he was a eunuch. Abbas appointed Habu *sallama* on his accession. Habu was a eunuch, and was unrelated to Jatau, whose progeny were likely shut out of the position because of the active role he played against the British in

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[52]Drawn from a variety of District Notebooks (Dutse, Dawakin Tofa, Birnin Kudu, Gwarzo, Minjibir, Gwaram, and Rano) in Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, "A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809-1903)" (Ph.D., unpublished, Indiana University, 1985), 191. *Kilishi* Aliyu and *Makaman Shamaki* Adamu were also killed in battles against Damagaram. Barde's death likely occurred during Emir Aliyu's attack against *Sarkin Damagaram* Ahmadu at Gezawa. Likewise, in 1898, Aliyu was defeated by Damagaram, a battle in which two-hundred of Aliyu's troops were wounded.

[53]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996. See also interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

[54]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996.

[55]Interview with Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, 20 March 1998.

1903. Habu survived for many years, and was later replaced by Nayaba during the early part of Usman's reign.[56]

The Office of *Sallama*, c. 1819-1926

Mageru [Abdullahi]
Rabo [Abdullahi]
Mai Yaki [Bello-Tukur, deposed by Aliyu c. 1894/95]
Barde [Yusufu-Aliyu, died c. 1896]
Jatau [Aliyu, died 1903]
Habu [Abbas 1903-c.1920/21, deposed by Usman]
Nayaba [Usman, 1921-1926]

As indicated in Chapter One, once Ibrahim Dabo revived the slave titles, Barka became *dan rimi* and Nasamu became *shamaki*.[57] Barka may have replaced a free Fulani client who held the office under Suleiman, as, according to M.G. Smith, Suleiman appointed Mohamman as *dan rimi*. While my oral sources never referred to Mohamman by name, some emphasized that the *dan rimi* was not initially a slave title during the early part of Fulani rule, perhaps a reflection of Mohamman's tenure in office.[58] *Dan Sarai* Alhaji Gambo Mohammad recounts a tradition in which Barka was the brother of the "first" *Dan Rimi*, Ibrahim Jikan Makka. When the title became a slave post, he "left everything about it to his brother, Barka." This reflects the actual transition of *dan rimi* from a title occupied by a free Fulani

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[56]Interviews with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998 and *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998. See also East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, Vol II, 70-73 and interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996.
[57]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998. See also Salih, *Taqyid*, 50.
[58]See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 235. See interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998

client to one occupied by slaves.[59] Barka was closely associated with the royal house, and his own children held the position of *dan rimi* after he left office, including Malam, Yahaya (c. 1883-1894) and Nuhu (c. 1893/94-1903/4). It is also likely that *Dan Rimi* Dan Kaka[60] and *Dan Rimi* Hamza were the sons of Barka.[61] Barka was also known as Ibrahim Barka. Both Nasamu and Ibrahim Barka represent the development of royal slave power and the entrenchment of slave officialdom from the time of Ibrahim Dabo to Abdullahi Maje Karofi. *Shamaki* Nasamu and *Dan Rimi* Ibrahim Barka were the central figures in Dabo's successful adoption of a centralized and dynastic emirship. Barka's origins are obscure. According to some oral traditions, he was also from Bagirmi or "Chad", but came to Kano via Dutse.[62] Another tradition suggests he was originally from Wadai.[63] Barka was most certainly living in Kano before the *jihad*, and like Nasamu was a former slave of Alwali. While both Nasamu and Barka were already members of the slave hierarchy before the *jihad*, they nonetheless remained

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[59]Interview with *Dan Sarai* Alhaji Gambo Mohammad, 29 July 1996: "Ibrahim Jikan Makka was the first child of the first *dan rimi*. So *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, Barka, Malam were all brothers of the same father and mother."

[60]The name "Dan Kaka" generally refers to a boy born at harvest time. See G.P. Bargery, *A Hausa English Dictionary*, 531. This suggests that Dan Kaka was born inside of the palace. He would have otherwise been given a different, characteristically first generation, slave name.

[61]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996 and *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1-2 April 1998. One slave named "Barka" and another named "Barka Wuta" [Wuta: hot tempered person or indication of tribal/clan markings] are mentioned in the *Kano Chronicle* during the reign of Babba Zaki (c. 1768-1776). Another named "Bagarmi" suggests that slaves from Bagirmi were common in Kano during the period. See *The Kano Chronicle*, 126 and East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, II, 58.

[62]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* and Malam Aminu, 31 March 1998.

[63]Interview with Malam Da'u Aliyu, 31 December 1989, conducted and cited by Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki, 1865-1917," 58.

isolated from political life and decision-making until Ibrahim Dabo became Emir.

Oral tradition relates that Barka once teased Dabo about the future, and said that Dabo would become as strong and powerful as a Rimi tree, to which Dabo replied: "if I am a Rimi tree you will be together with me as the son of the Rimi tree [dan Rimi]." When Dabo decided to appoint Barka to an office, he chose to "create" a "new" title called *dan rimi*.[64] Although Dabo borrowed the title from the *Habe* regime, these stories of origin suggests that Barka was indeed a special and unique individual. Barka certainly founded a dynasty which dominated the title of *dan rimi* until the beginning of the twentieth century. M. G. Smith places the number of persons who held the position of *dan rimi* in the nineteenth century at a much smaller number than I. He refers only to Barka, Yahaya and Nuhu. He also argues that another Barka, who held the title of *sallama*, was in power during the reigns of both Abdullahi and Bello.[65] According to the *Kano Chronicle*, during the reign of Emir Abdullahi Maje Karofi, one slave named "Salemma Berka" became "great" [Hausa: *alfarma*] in the sense that he assumed a higher position than was normally permitted. However, my oral informants unanimously stated that no *Sallama* Barka ever existed, and maintained instead that there was only a *Dan Rimi* Barka:

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[64]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998. Other traditions relate that it was Abdullahi dan Fodio who gave Dabo and Barka the nickames; see interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998. Others explicitly associate the title with the strength of the Rimi tree; see interview with Alhaji Kabiru Abdulkadir Abdullahi Kwaru, *Shamakin Turakin Kano*, 31 August 1996. Similar traditions were recorded by Priscilla Starrat in "Oral History in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili Legends in Kano" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Michigan, 1993), 65.

[65]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 293.

> No. There was nothing like *Sallama* Barka. Only *Dan Rimi* Barka. No *Sallama* Barka. He is the father of *Dan Rimi* Nuhu and father of *Dan Rimi* Yahaya. But we produced *Dan Rimi* Allah Bar Sarki, *Dan Rimi* Mohammadu and *Dan Rimi* Abdul-Kadir.[66]

Likewise, Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru argues that *Sallama* Barka never existed, and claims that *Dan Rimi* Barka held the title from the reign of Dabo until he was deposed by Emir Muhammad Bello sometime in the mid 1880's.[67] This also seems unlikely, given the fact that Barka was a slave of Alwali before the jihad. Assuming he was twenty when the jihadists conquered Kano in 1806/07, he would have been ninety-three in 1883, surely too old to hold any title, even assuming he was still alive. This age is of course a conservative estimate. That he must have been an adult in 1819 is based on oral evidence indicating (1) Barka was a royal slave before the jihad (2) he was known for his administrative/political ability and experience. He was likely much older than twenty when he became *Dan Rimi.*[68]

Other oral accounts relate that after Barka died (likely at the very end of Dabo's reign or the beginning of Usman Maje Ringim's reign), his son, called "Malam Barka" or *Dan Rimi* Malam took over the title and was then followed by Dan Kaka, another son of Barka: "Dan Kaka also succeeded Barka as Dan Rimi."[69] All the oral traditions agree that a

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[66]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

[67]Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 61 and 79.

[68]Wada Dako claimed that Barka died in 1845, one year before Ibrahim Dabo in 1846. See interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998.

[69]Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar,* 58. According to Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, after Barka became too old to hold the title, he was replaced by Malam Barka, who survived only one year due to serious conflict with Abdullahi Maje Karofi, and was then replaced by Dan Kaka, another son of Barka, who ruled 7-8 years before being replaced by Salam. Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

rupture occurred in personal and political relations between Barka's descendants and Abdullahi Maje Karofi. This led to the appointment of a "Buzu" named Salam or Salamu, who was not related to the house of Barka, sometime during the reign of Maje Karofi: "It is in the house of *dan rimi* a new *dan rimi* is appointed. It was only *Dan Rimi* Salam who was not his son As for him (Salam), he was the Emir's slave When he died (i.e. when Barka died), his children were very young. Then his slave was appointed *dan rimi* instead."[70]

> *Dan Rimi* Salam came from Tunis. They were riding camels and then Emir Abdullahi [Maje Karofi] caught them and brought them to the palace. The first title he held was *sarkin littafi*. . . then as time goes he [was] appointed *dan rimi*.[71]

Salam was certainly *dan rimi* by 1867, as he is mentioned by Salih in the *Taqyid al-akhbar*: "His slaves that help him [Abdullahi] in the administration of the Emirate include Shamaki MaiGari, Dan Rimi Salam, Turaki Barka, Turakin Soro and Kasheka Gajere . . . His slave who was used in helping in the administration but was at the *Ribat* was Mainasara, he was replaced by Barde Jammo at the Garki ribat in the northward direction."[72] One tradition relates that Salam was then followed by Hamza, a son of Barka, who held the title during the last years of Abdullahi Maje Karofi's reign. Yahaya, the fourth son of Barka, was given the title by Mohammed Bello, and survived until Tukur was defeated in the Kano Civil War by Yusufu and Aliyu, who

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[70]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.
[71]Interview with *Madakin Dan Rimi* Umaru, 17 August 1996. Umaru is the grandson of Salam.
[72]Salih, *Taqyid al-akhbar*, 58-60.

appointed his brother, and the fifth son of Barka, as *dan rimi.*[73] Nuhu was four years old during the war with Dan Mari of Maradi in 1843.[74] According to Alhaji Husaini Sufi, who collected numerous traditions in the palace, after Dabo died, Nuhu left Kano to study in Agades, and did not return to Kano until the time of Abdullahi Maje Karofi.[75] Nuhu was fifty-five when he became *dan rimi* under Yusufu and Aliyu. Nuhu was later deposed by Abbas (on the insistence of the British). Although he managed to retain the title for a short time after the British conquest, his participation in the Battle of Kwartakwarshi guaranteed his removal. Abbas also had a personal grudge against him. After Nuhu was demoted, Abbas had him jailed.[76] Nuhu's grandson, Alhaji Abubakar Sadauki, stated that after his dismissal Nuhu wrote a series of poems chastising and ridiculing the Emir. He refused to show me copies of the poems, because he did not want to ruin his family's relationship with the current Emir. Nuhu survived well into the colonial period, and in 1909 collected a salary of £1.0.0. by the British Residency as an advisor and "historical expert."[77] After Nuhu's deposition, Abbas shifted control of the title to to Allah Bar

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[73]Interviews with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996 and *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29-30 March 1998.

[74]Husaini Sufi, *Mu san Kammu*, 72. However, another tradition collected by Husaini Sufi states that Nuhu was six years old when Ibrahim Dabo died in 1846, a small discrepancy.

[75]*Ibid.*

[76]Interviews with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Mallam Aminu, 31 March 1998, *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Mallam Aminu, 1 April 1998 and *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998, 30 March 1998.

[77]NAK SNP 7/10 6415/1909. See also interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998: "The Emir Abbas had a bad habit and used to fight with the then *Dan Rimi* because the *Dan Rimi* felt that Abbas was not the right person to rule the people . . . so they became enemies and they fought."

Sarki, who was unrelated to Barka's house.[78] Allah Bar Sarki was captured during the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi during an attack on Ningi in 1871.[79]. He was likely eight years old when first brought to Kano, and was *warjawa* by ethnicity. He became close to Maje Karofi, and progressed through a series of slave titles, including *galadiman rumbu* and *sarkin hatsi.*[80] Allah Bar Sarki was later promoted to the position of *waziri* in 1908, and was likely replaced by Sambo sometime between 1908 and 1910. Sambo was originally from Katsina or possibly Zazzau, and unrelated to Barka or Allah Bar Sarki.[81] Although family tradition records that Allah Bar Sarki re-assumed the title of *dan rimi* after he was deposed from the position of *waziri* in 1908, independent accounts suggest that he was replaced: "Then after he was humiliated would rather die than be made *dan rimi* again."[82] It is likely that after Allah Bar Sarki was promoted to *waziri*, Sambo was made *dan rimi* to replace him. Sambo had served as *makaman dan rimi* under Abbas, and remained as *makaman dan rimi* after Allah Bar Sarki's appointment to office, but in effect took over the duties of *dan rimi.*

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[78]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

[79]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Mukhtar "Notes on the History of Kano," 27. See also interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. On Ningi, see Adell Patton Jr., "The Ningi Chiefdom and the African Frontier: Mountaineers and Resistance to the Sokoto Caliphate, ca. 1800-1908" (Ph.D., unpublished, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975) and Adell Patton Jr., "Ningi Raids and Slavery in Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate" in *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 2, No. 2 (1981), 114-145.

[80]For biographical details, see Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki". Allah Bar Sarki has also been discussed in: Adamu Mohammad Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, Lovejoy, Mahadi and Mukhtar, "Notes on the History of Kano," C.N. Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate* (Nsukka, 1985) and Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power."

[81]Interview with *Ciroman Dan Rimi* Isyaku, 30 August 1996 and NAK KANOPROF c.111.

[82]Interview with Alhaji Aliyu Waziri, 27 February 1996. See also Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "C.L. Temple's Notes on the History of Kano," 23-32 and Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki."

This was a common palace practice, and could be used as both a reward and a punishment. According to colonial sources, after Allah Bar Sarki was demoted he was "re-made" into *dan rimi*, which may indeed have been true, but in practice it was likely that *Makaman Dan Rimi* Sambo carried out the formal functions of office and occupied the compound in the palace. Sambo survived until Usman II came to power as Emir when he too was deposed in favour of Mamman, who held the title for five years (c. 1920-1925) until he was exiled from Kano by the British.[83]

Another version of the history of the Barka dynasty reverses the order of a number of appointments, and neglects to mention both Hamza and Dan Kaka. Barka survived until the reign of Maje Karofi, when he was replaced by Salam because of a "serious misunderstanding" between the two.[84] Maje Karofi deliberately took the title from his house and progeny and gave it to an unrelated, first generation slave.[85] After Salam, the title was restored to the house of Barka:". . . it was from him that [Barka's] family kept holding the title, like *Dan Rimi* Nuhu."[86] In this version it was Malam Barka who served as *Dan Rimi* until the reign of Mohammed Bello, when he was deposed and Yahaya was appointed:

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[83]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 28 February 1996 and *Sarkin Shanu Mohammadu*, 7 June 1996.

[84]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alahji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.

[85]See interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. Although Salam had many relations, none of his children became *dan rimi* after him: "Q: What about his children, were there any among them who were made *dan rimi*? A: Who, Salam? No, look at them, Mamman Dogo and others were his children. They have many relatives, they were many, but none of them became *dan rimi*."

[86]Interview with *Dan Sarai* Alhaji Gambo Mohammad, 29 July 1996.

> So *Dan Rimi* Malam who is the son of Barka took over from Salam He also was a good administrator just like his father. He lived until the time of Bello when *Dan Rimi* Yahaya who is also a son of Barka [was appointed] Both of them have a high temper, and sometimes they lived well [with the *Sarkin Kano* Bello] and other times they were at loggerheads [with the Emir].[87]

Although the number and the order of the individuals varies, the key elements in all the versions are essentially the same: Ibrahim Barka established control of the title of *dan rimi* and had a very close relationship with Ibrahim Dabo, but his family was removed from power by Abdullahi Maje Karofi and replaced by an "outsider" named Salam. Salam was in turn replaced by one of Barka's sons. Afterward, Barka's house held the title for the rest of the nineteenth century. Hence, the confusion between "Sallama Barka" in the *Kano Chronicle* and the *Dan Rimi* named "Salam."

Two Possible Chronologies for the Office of *Dan Rimi*, c. 1819-1926

Version 1	**Version 2**
"Ibrahim" Barka [Dabo-Usman,d. 1850's]	"Ibrahim" Barka [Dabo-Abdullahi]
Malam Barka [Usman-Abdullahi]	Salam [Abdullahi]
Dan Kaka [Usman-Abdullahi]	Malam Barka [Abdullahi-Bello]
Salam [Abdullahi]	Yahaya [Bello-Tukur]
Hamza [Abdullahi]	Nuhu [Tukur-Aliyu]
Yahaya [Bello-Tukur, c. 1883-1894]	Allah Bar Sarki [Abbas]
Nuhu [Yusufu-Aliyu, c. 1893-1903/04]	Sambo [Abbas]
Allah bar Sarki [Abbas, c. 1903-1907]	Mamman [Usman]
Sambo [Abbas, c. 1908/09-1919/20]	
Mamman [Usman, c. 1919/20-1926]	

[87]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998. Halil Ibrahim Sa'id, also who mentions *Dan Rimi* "Salama", although he claims "Salama" held the title during Bello's reign. See Halil Ibrahim Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," 246.

Clearly, there was conflict between a number of slave title-holders and both Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Muhammad Bello. What, then, was the basis for this conflict, and which personalities were actually involved? The reign of Muhammad Bello witnessed something of a crisis in the relationship between emir and slave, as Bello executed or demoted a large number of Abdullahi's former royal slaves. Clearly, from the evidence presented above, this was nonetheless common practice. It is therefore likely that the basis for the conflict lay less in the actual removal of slaves, although this would have been a bitter pill for many to swallow, but revolved around Bello's attempts to reduce the power and position of the entire royal slave community. These difficulties were one factor which led to the *Basasa* or Kano Civil War which as indicated above resulted in the wholesale deposition of important royal slave title-holders.

The confusion over the identities of certain royal slaves stems from a variety of factors. The time depth of the oral data is relatively shallow, and therefore, individuals were either forgotten or amalgamated into a single, representative person; hence, the importance of additional source material, such as Temple's "Notes on the History of Kano," the *Kano Chronicle* and Salih's *Taqyid al-akhbar.* In addition, conflict between royal slaves, royal slave families and the emir was never explicitly acknowledged by my informants. Although they certainly referred to the occasional rift between certain royal slave title-holders and certain Emirs, I was usually unable to elicit any detailed information about the causes of the conflicts. Royal slave

ideology and identity place great emphasis on the cooperative relationship between the emir and his slaves.[88] Thus, royal slave loyalty and reliability to the emir and the state is generally celebrated. Consequently, conflict is generally kept private.

The history of these individuals does nonetheless reflect some important realities about the royal slave system in Kano. The relatively large number of royal slaves who held the title of *dan rimi* suggests that conflict between the reigning emir and individual royal slaves occurred regularly. Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru noted that it was exceedingly rare for senior royal slave title-holders, especially those who held the title of *dan rimi*, to die in office (at least of natural causes). They were deposed often.[89] Another informant was more circumspect, and connects the removal of slave title-holders to their own errors of judgment or to offenses against the state:

> No, anybody who made a mistake or committed an offense he could be removed, if it was the end of his stay here he could be removed. Whether you like it or not somebody could be removed if he made a mistake, whether he died or not. But simply because a new Emir was appointed? He couldn't remove royal slaves. Anybody who was made Emir of Kano we transferred our loyalty to him. Anybody who was made Emir we never spent a day disliking him in our minds or being disloyal to him, we just look at him like the other one. We just wait and see, it is God who will decide.[90]

If we assume that ten royal slaves held the title of *dan rimi* between 1819 and 1926, the average time in office for a "typical" *dan rimi* would

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[88]Interview with *Galadiman Lifida* Mohammad Lawal, 19 August 1996.
[89]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.
[90]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. See also interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Mohammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

have been 10.7 years. There were ten Emirs serving between 1819 and 1926. Between the reigns of Ibrahim Dabo and Muhammad Bello (1819-1893) six slaves held the title. The pattern which emerges indicates that although in theory the emir inherited the royal slaves of his predecessor, as soon as a new emir assumed the throne he would generally appoint his own favourites to the highest slave posts. "Ibrahim" Barka was likely deposed by Emir Usman. Likewise, Salam and Hamza were deposed by Abdullahi. Each successive *dan rimi* afterwards was also deposed: Malam Barka by Bello, Yahaya by Aliyu, Nuhu and Allah Bar Sarki by Abbas and Sambo by Usman. In their place, personal, favourite slaves were selected.[91] This pattern is also discernible in the offices of *shamaki* and *sallama*. There were ten, possibly twelve, officials who held the title of *shamaki* between 1819 and 1926, giving each an average tenure of 10.7 or 8.9 years. Very few lived beyond the reign of a single emir. Seven slaves held the office of *sallama* between 1855 and 1926, giving each an average time of 10.1 years in power. If we restrict ourselves to the period between 1819 and 1903, the average number of years in office for each title-holder was 12, 12 and 9.6 respectively.

This pattern played itself out after 1903, although in the context of colonial rule which changed some of the conditions of promotion and office-holding. When Usman was given the emirship in 1919, he wanted to appoint Aliyu na Aliyu, the then *sarkin fada*, as *dan rimi* to replace Sambo, who had been serving Abbas since c.1908. Usman did

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[91]See Chapter Three.

not trust Sambo and regarded him purely as a creature of Abbas.[92] However, Aliyu died before he could be appointed. Instead, Usman appointed Mamman, a royal slave from Takai, who was not related to the houses of Barka or Allah Bar Sarki.[93] Although he was Usman's second choice, Mamman had been very close to him before 1919-1920, and it was for this reason (as well as his ability and experience) that he was appointed.[94]

The career of *Sarkin Fada* Aliyu also demonstrates that there were exceptions to the pattern described above. Royal slaves who had spent many years in the palace could be extremely valuable to an emir. They would be knowledgeable, capable and able to mobilize and control the slave palace community. They were also no doubt difficult to depose if popular and powerful. Usman was not the first Emir to inherit and value Aliyu's skills. Aliyu started his career in the late nineteenth century as a slave in *Sarkin Kano* Aliyu's palace establishment: "Of the important palace slaves Abbas took over only one from his predecessor Aliu-viz Turakin Soro [*Turakin Soro*], so that the rest were his own appointees."[95] Aliyu na Aliyu may very well have been in the palace even before the reign of *Sarkin Kano* Aliyu, possibly

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[92]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 31 March 1998.
[93]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 31 March 1998.
[94]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996 See also interviews with *Kilishi* Muhammad Nasiru, 29 February 1996 and 2 August 1996. See also NAK SNP 10/7 318p/1919: "I am glad to say that the Waziri's reputation for integrity is still maintained, but the Emir once he felt himself firmly seated in the saddle has been too much inclined to ignore him, and to all intents and purposes the real Waziri was an old slave of Abdullahi, named Aliyu, who had a remarkable and most undesirable influence over the Emir. It would have been necessary sooner or later to insist on this man's being got rid of, but he recently solved the problem by dying."
[95]NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921.

as early as Abdullahi Maje Karofi.[96] Although the above example is drawn from the colonial period, it is intended to emphasize the importance of the relationship between individual emirs and slaves: the system was dynamic. Furthermore, the examples also demonstrate that Barka's dynasty lost control of the office of *Dan Rimi* after 1903, a profoundly important change to the pre-colonial pattern of office holding and slave officialdom.

The list below represents a chronology of the slaves who held the title of *dan rimi.* Unless new information about the mysterious *Sallama* Barka or the *Turaki* Barka mentioned by Muhammad b. Salih is uncovered, it seems unlikely that *Dan Rimi* Barka was involved in a conflict with both Abdullahi and Bello. Rather, it is more probable that Barka died or was deposed during the reign of Usman.[97] He was replaced by his son, Dan Kaka, who was died during Usman's final years, or was deposed by Abdullahi. Because there were no eligible successors in Barka's house, or as a result of conflict between Barka's house and Abdullahi, *Dan Rimi* Salam was appointed. The conflict between Barka's house and Abdullahi may have been based on the fact that Barka's progeny supported a different candidate for the emirship.[98] According to Alhaji Abba Sadauki, *Dan Rimi* Barka raised Mohammadu, the son of one of Ibrahim Dabo's wives, and hoped that he would eventually become Emir. On the other hand, *Shamaki* Nasamu raised the son of Dabo's concubine, Shekara, and in turn hoped that this son

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[96]NAK SNP 10/7 318p/1919.
[97]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.
[98]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.

would become Emir. Whatever the truth of the story, it reflects the possibility of conflict between royal slaves and prospective candidates to the throne, and further emphasizes the importance of ties to the royal household and individual emirs in the establishment of a successful "slave career." Salam was eventually deposed, one informant suggested as a result of philandering with the Emir's concubines, and was replaced by Malam Barka, or *Dan Rimi* Malam, who survived into Bello's time.[99] He was soon replaced by Yahaya as part of Bello's larger purge of slave and free officialds. After Yahaya, the two lists generally correspond. These conclusions are of course tentative, and will no doubt be subject to change should more oral data be collected on the history of royal slave families in Kano. Thus Sallama Barka mentioned in the *Kano Chronicle* represents two individuals: *Dan Rimi* Salam and *Dan Rimi* Malam Barka, a son of the first *dan rimi* who succeeded *Dan Rimi* Salam.

The Office of *Dan Rimi*, c. 1819-1926

Ibrahim Barka [Dabo-Usman]
Dan Kaka [Usman]
Salam [Abdullahi, by at least 1867]
Hamza [Abdullahi]
Malam Barka [Abdullahi-Bello]
Yahaya [Bello-Tukur]
Nuhu [Yusufu-Aliyu, 1894-1903/04]
Allah Bar Sarki [Abbas, 1903/04-1907]
Sambo [Abbas, 1908/09-1919/20]
Mamman [Usman, 1919/20-1926]

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[99]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998. See also M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 295-296.

The above section has attempted to document the histories of a number of individual slaves, and the occupants of the most important slave offices in Kano Emirate. It is, moreover, the first systematic attempt to do so, and will no doubt be revised by future research. Nonetheless, this reconstruction of slave offices and biographies provides the context for the history of nineteenth century Kano. Until we know precisely "who was who," we cannot fully "unpack" the narrative of Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Muhammad Bello's reigns, as well as the history of the *Basasa*. The patterns of power described above indicate that as the nineteenth century progressed, slaves from within certain households gained control of some key slave titles, most especially the *dan rimi*. It was relatively common for new emirs to depose the slaves of the former ruler, although it is also clear that some individuals could not be easily replaced. They had simply become too powerful to challenge without grave consequences. Moreover, the rich history of royal slave individuals further demonstrates that the *mamluk* system established by Dabo took root long before his death in 1846, and flourished most especially during the reigns of Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Aliyu Babba.

The Kano Mamluks and the Kofa System, 1819-1903

Dabo's royal slave system was built upon *Sarkin Kano* Babba Zaki's system of slave intermediaries [Hausa: *wasidodi*][100] who were generally known by the Hausa words *kofa* and *kofofi* [door, gate; doors, gates][101]. It is likely that Ibrahim Barka's previous experience in the palace proved helpful in the recreation of this system, as was the advice of *Galadima* Ango. Ango was Hausa and was described as "a servitor of the Emir's and the only Hausa to hold this post in the Fulani era. He was deposed in 1845 when his patron died and Usman became Emir."[102]

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[100]On Babba Zaki and royal slaves, see M. Hiskett, 'The Song of Bagauda: A Hausa King List and Homily in Verse II' , *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 28, 2 (1965), 118. Babba Zaki was *Sarkin Kano* between c. 1768-1776.
"It was his sovereignty that has set the standard for Kano/It was he who introduced remoteness into Kingship./Setting body-guards to rebuke the people./One could not see him-the Great One-except through an intermediary/It was his confidant who would arrange an audience." See also M. Adamu Na Ma'aji, *Ta'rikh Kano* (unpublished MS), quoted by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 104: "Next Babba Zaki, son of Yaji (1753-1768) and Zainabu, a very powerful man. It was he who organized the affairs of state. None of his predecessors had organized the state the way he did. He first introduced the system of gatekeepers (*wasidodi*) so that even his women could only reach him through an intermediary. Nobody could see him except through his slaves. It was Babba Zaki who first organized spying (secret communications between people). He used to go through the city with his slaves, some armed with muskets that made a loud noise. He did so throughout his reign and his successors followed his example." See also the *Kano Chronicle*, which states that Babbi Zaki: "curbed the power of the Sarkis and head slaves and plundered them every day. He forced them to give presents under compulsion and go to war unwillingly." For his efforts, Babbi Zaki was known as the "disturber of the elephants." The Chronicler then names forty-two great men: "Each of them thought he was greater than the rest in the Sarkis eyes. Thus the Sarki planned." As part of his reliance on royal slaves, Babba Zaki employed a guard of slave musketeers, a practice that continued in the nineteenth century.
[101]See C.K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass, 1971-originally published in 1921), 252: "A characteristic of most kingdoms was the presence at the capital of territorial representatives known as *kofofi* or 'doors', corresponding somewhat to Roman *patroni*, who investigated local disputes, and either disposed of them or referred them to king and council." See also Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, II, 30.
[102]HCB 1/11/2, Dawakin Kudu History.

Likewise, Alwali's former *ciroma*, Dan Mama, had extensive experience and knowledge of centralized administration.[103] As a group, Dabo's royal slaves were also known as *sarakunan fada* [masters of the court] and *sarakunan cikin gida* [masters of the inner palace], terms that reflected their importance in the royal household.[104] In the *kofa* system, the *shamaki, dan rimi,* and *sallama* served as the central channels of communication between free-born title-holders and the *sarki.*

> The relationship [between the slaves and emir and the *hakimai* and the emir] is entirely different. The slaves participated in the activities inside the palace, including the emir's household, while the *hakimai* participated in duties outside of the palace.[105]

As 'gates' royal slaves dominated communications between nearly all of the free-born officials and the emir.[106] The *hakimai* were distributed among the slave *kofofi* or gates who were also responsible for communicating with the *tambari* chiefs. According to oral data collected by M. G. Smith in 1959, the *kofofi* system allowed the *sarki* to: ". . . play off the *tambari* chiefs, the *hakimai* and his slave *kofa*s against one another" pitting "*kofa* against *kofa, hakimi* against *tambari* chief, *kofa* against the official whose communication he handled, or the *hakimi* and his *kofa* against the *tambari* chief and his."[107] This allowed the emirs of

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[103]See M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano.* 238-239.
[104]See Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 271.
[105]Interview with Alhaji Mohammad Hassan, 10 March 1998.
[106]The Emir, however, retained direct access to territorial rulers or *tambari* chiefs including *Sarkin Rano, Sarkin Gaya, Sarkin Dutse* and *Sarkin Karaye.* He also had direct access to the *ma'aji* and the *limam.*
[107]Smith, *Government in Kano,* 87. See also Mahadi, 271.

Kano in the nineteenth century to play-off factions of officials against one another, thereby centralizing their own power in the face of the rivalry between a variety of slave and free officials. Their roles as "gates" also gave certain royal slaves privileged access to sensitive political information. By the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi, slaves were used to transmit messages between the emir, officials in other Emirates and at Sokoto.[108] The *dan sarai* conveyed the annual tribute of slaves, cowries and other materials to Sokoto.[109] Likewise, the *ciroman shamaki* was often sent to Adamawa as a messenger.[110] As noted by Smith, it was Dabo who recreated the system of titled *jakadu* as a means to secure his control of taxation.[111] Because the political elite did not live in the Districts they supervised, the *jakadu*, many of whom were slaves or the clients of slaves, were the means through which elite political culture moved beyond the borders of urban Kano into the vast region of smaller rural farming settlements that surrounded Kano. The *jakadu* represented slave and free officialdom in the Districts.[112] Dabo also established contingents of slave cavalry,

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[108]Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, II, 33 who notes that prominent travellers were given *jakadu* from "one court to the next" who obtained provisions, shelter and introduces the travellers to the next ruler "with a letter from his lord and master."

[109]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 289, records a similar tradition.

[110]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998. See also interview with *Sarkin Zage* Mohammad Bashir, 13 August 1996.

[111]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 245.

[112]British colonial officials also took note of the central role royal slaves played in the transmission of civil and central authority to the rest of the Emirate: "It remains to be considered, whether in pressing forward the abolition of the Jekadas, and the old slave retainers, I have not been going too fast. They, after all were the emblem of civil authority, and made a display of physical force, which appealed to the ignorant talakawa in the country. In abolishing what is practically the old Kano army, there is nothing at present to replace them but our own troops. In other words, if we remove the fear of force as evidenced by the old Jekadu, we must be prepared to back up the new

led by the *garkuwan karfe*, a slave title-holder, and the "state police," first led by a free Fulani client with the office of *sarkin dogarai*. Maje Karofi later made the *sarkin dogarai* a slave title.

Ibrahim Dabo held a council daily, where his slaves and other title-holders came together to discuss and debate matters of state. Access to the emir at *fada* meetings was highly restricted.[113] This practice continued under Dabo's successors. No longer could any person simply arrive at the palace and greet the emir as they could under Emir Suleiman. Royal slave status was differentiated, and only the most senior or favoured slaves had close access to the emir.[114]

> Before [Barka] all the councillors, the *madaki, makama* and so on, will come here in this house and sit side by side with Dabo . . . so one day [Barka] removed all the others, to sit apart from Dabo. When you come they [the slaves] will grab you and force you down to greet the emir. And from then on to today, that's how it is going.[115]

The individuals documented above would have been acting in this capacity during their tenure in office. This in turn reflects the importance placed on access and proximity to the emir as the source of power and prestige. Symbolically, power emanated outwards from the

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Native Civil authority by patrols until such time as the new native organization acquires sufficient moral force to obtain respect for its law courts and police." See NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909.

[113]See Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, I, 215.

[114]See, for example, Imam Imoru's comments: "Then the leader of the king's bodyguards, sarkin dogarai, assembles the bodyguards to await the entry of the king. Going to the place where they stand in wait for him, they pass the King's chambers but they do not go to the inner room. They go to a shelter in between the two where they are not seen by the people of the king's chamber or the people of the inner room, and the bodyguards do not see the king, eunuchs or slaves." Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland," 210.

[115]*Ibid.*

emir to the rest of the court. By 1853, during the reign of Usman, the palace establishment consisted of numerous courtiers and slaves. According to Barth:

> the 'fada,' 'lamorde,' or palace, which forms a real labyrinth of court-yards, provided with spacious round huts of audience, built of clay, with a door on each side, and connected together by narrow intricate passages. Hundreds of lazy, arrogant courtiers, freemen and slaves, were lounging and idling here, killing time with trivial and saucy jokes.[116]

During the reign of Suleiman, the council met at the *Soron Fadanci* located in the northern section of the palace amidst a labyrinth of passageways.[117] This continued during the reign of Dabo, although as noted above, palace ritual was greatly elaborated. Abdullahi Maje Karofi held the morning *fada* in the southern section of the palace and the evening meeting in the *Soron Fadanci.*[118] This was a result of an expansion of the palace establishment in the southern portion of the palace, located at *kofar kudu* [southern gate]. Court ritual emphasized the singularity of the emir, his removal from the profane and his status as a sacred monarch. Royal slaves were also responsible for caring for the body of a deceased emir: "When they gather on that evening they close the gate of the king's palace so they can dig his grave in privacy."[119] As slaves, the Kano *mamluks* could cross the divide between the sacred and the profane, and were thus intimately

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[116]Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 493-494.

[117]Nast, "Space, History and Power," 95.

[118]Nast, *ibid.*, citing interview with *Madaki*, 26 July 1990. Barth noted that *Galadima* Abdullahi visited Emir Usman's court "nearly everyday" in the 1850's. See Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 494.

[119]Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland," 219 describing Kabi [Kebbi?] and interview *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998.

associated with both the emir's daily tasks and with the cultural construction of his appearance in the court and public. Their presence was part of the public spectacle associated with royal power. The emir's dress, public manner and retinue visually demonstrated his power and position.

> When [the court] has assembled, the kilishi comes with the king's couch and prepares the hide mats. It is as if he is saying the king is ready to come out, so the gathering gets comfortable and sits at attention. When he returns, the king prepares to come out: he ties his turban and passes it across his mouth, and he puts on sandals decorated with ostrich feathers. Then he holds his staff, kandiri, and the eunuchs and slave officials say: "Step forward Lion!" cirawa zaki! The king walks slowly, and half the entourage walks in front while the other half follow him.[120]

After Dabo's reforms, the emir was supposed to speak very quietly, almost inaudibly, and the *kilishi* would then repeat his words so all could hear them: "After he is seated, his elder sons, the territorial administrators . . . go to greet him . . . the king replies with his hand, or in a whisper people cannot hear."[121] Likewise, the emir was veiled from public view: "Horses surround the king on all sides and his face cannot be seen for he is wearing a white hooded gown, farar alkeba."[122]. Slave trumpeters [Hausa: *kakakai*] led by the *sarkin kakakai* sounded their instruments when Dabo and his successors left their chambers, contributing to the public spectacle. The emir interacted with the profane world through his royal slaves. Slaves managed and

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[120]*Ibid.*, 211.

[121]*Ibid.*

[122]*Ibid.*, 216. This was reflected in the layout of the palace, where, as Clapperton noted, a visitor had to pass through a series of gates guarded by slaves. See Denham, Clapperton and Oudney, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries*, II, 243 and 253.

participated in his care and his daily routine, and were his closest political confidants. This relationship was sustained by formal and informal networks of patronage in the palace, and by their personal/household ties. Royal slaves governed Kano as members of the emir's household and in their capacity as formal state title-holders. Power was personalized. It was based on variable relationships between kin, slaves and clients. Slave power was also vested in the access to the rewards of office that both their titles and their relationship with the royal household provided

When Barth visited Kano in 1851 he was admitted to a council of the Emir, Usman (1846-1855). He recorded the presence of a number of officials, including the *galadima* and the *sarkin shanu*, but he did not mention any slave officials or a number of free officials who would have had a formal place in council.[123] As M.G. Smith has suggested, it was likely that Usman relied on these persons for advice and counsel apart from the more formal procedures of the court.[124] The "informal" positions held by slaves as private advisors was a fundamental component of slave power in Dabo's time. Imam Imoru also emphasized that slave title-holders were the emir's informal councillors, who advised him in matters of custom, politics and policy:

> In Kano one finds the following seven. The first is shamaki: he looks after the King's horses. He is also called jatau, "overseer of the slaves." The second is dan rimi who is the King's top slave official: there is a big family in his house and all the weapons are kept there. The third is salama, "one who knocks at the door," and people call him aljifun sarki, the "king's pocket" or "half the king," or shashin sarki, the "king's busom friend." The fourth is kasheka:

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[123]Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 524-525.
[124]M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 259-261.

> he shares out the household supplies to the king's wives. These last two officials are eunuchs and are among the slave officials. The fifth official is the "guardian of the inner room," turakin soro. The sixth is abin fada, "go-between": telling something to him is like telling it to the king. The seventh is kilishi: he is the one who prepares the sitting place with the hide mats for the king. These seven officials are called the "slaves of the inner house," bayin cikin gida. When they greet the king in the morning, they sit and talk with him in a very attentive manner: one does not talk nonsense and there is no joking.[125]

Ibrahim Dabo appointed royal slaves to the *majalisa sarki* [Hausa: members of the court] which acted as an executive council. This council grew and developed under Dabo's successors, and by the time of Emir Aliyu, up to ten slaves served on the council. Under Dabo, slaves held and administered state lands attached to their office and from which they derived personal rewards. According to one informant, in the mid to late nineteenth century the estates were identified by the title of the slave who managed them. Thus, there were five estates located near *Gandun* Dorayi named: *Sallama, Dan Rimi, Kasheka, Turakin Soro* and *Sarkin Hatsi.*[126] Dabo also permitted royal slaves to don *alkyabba* robes, worn only by men of state.[127] Royal slaves took on the symbolic trappings of power and authority.[128] Like other officials,

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[125]Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland," 209-210. On general duties see interview with Alahji Abubukar Soron Dinki, 21 November 1995 and interviews from the *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, especially with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, M. Isyaku, 17 September 1975, Muhammadu Rabi'u, 13 July 1975 and Muhammadu Sarkin Yaki, 29 September 1975. See also Yusufu Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano" (B.A. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1976).

[126]Interview with Malam Isyaku, 17 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also interview with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995.

[127]Interview with *Madakin Kano* 27 July 1990, conducted and cited by Nast, "Space, History and Power", 101. See also Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 396 and Colleen Kriger, "Robes of the Sokoto Caliphate" in *African Arts* XXI 3 (1988), 52-86. See also interviews with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995, Malam Yunusa *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[128]See William Wallace, "Notes on a Journey," 212: "[the Waziri from Sokoto was] without kingly garments or the least sign of state, while within a few hundred yards the

when royal slaves were given titles they were turbaned in a special palace ceremony.[129] In this ceremony, the individual assumed the power and responsibilities associated with the title and formally became state functionaries. *Babban Zagi* Garba and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru both stated that the *sallama* was responsible for turbaning free title-holders as well, likely beginning in the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi.[130] Thus, the identity of royal slaves was socially constructed and expressed by the adoption of distinct modes of dress which reflected their access to power and authority: their bodies served as "the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted."[131] The body was in itself a field of representation, which created social value and legitimated slave authority.[132] Representations of the body also reinforced their slave status. Second generation slaves were given "three-three" or *uku-uku* marks to distinguish them from the free-born children of the emir and to elevate their status and position beyond that of first generation slaves. *Uku uku* marks were introduced either during the reign of Dabo or Maje Karofi. Given the evidence, it is most likely that Dabo began marking royal slaves near the end of his reign, when he complained that it was

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emir of the province of Kano was seated in embroidered robes on a gaudy throne, and was surrounded by a courtly retinue dressed in all the tawdry imitation of the Eastern courts."

[129]Interview with *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998. The ceremony occurred in the *shigifa*, where the state court assembled and conducted business. See Nast, "Engendering 'Space'," 1.

[130]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996 and *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998.

[131]Hildi Hendrickson (ed.), *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 2 citing Bryan J. Turner "The Social Skin" in J. Cherfas and R. Lewin (eds.), *Not Work Alone* (London: Temple Smith, 1980), 112.

[132]See L. Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

impossible to tell free from slave children.[133] Palace tradition asserts that Dabo had no other way of telling his children apart from those of his royal slaves. In either case, this was an important development, indicating a substantial enlargement of the royal slave system, possibly within the same generation in which it was established, and demonstrates the necessity of demarcating between slave and free. Malam Mahmudu even reported that "Slaves mingled readily with free people everywhere, but you could always tell the slaves from the others."[134] Some first generation slaves were distinguished by their poor or non-existent Hausa language skills, others by the facial markings they were given in their former homes.[135] Likewise, slaves were required to wear a slave loin-cloth under their state robes, an admission and visual representation of their unique and dual position in society. These symbols[136] and practices were instruments of domination which legitimated the social order by encouraging royal slaves to accept "the existing hierarchies of social distinction." Thus, "power resided not only in the coercive 'force' of symbolic ideas, but in the belief of and in their legitimacy."[137]

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[133]Interviews *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 15 December 1995, *Babban Zagi* Garba, 28 February 1996 and *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995. Other traditions date the *uku-uku* marks from the reign of Abdullahi (1855-1883); see, for example, interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996.

[134]Neil Skinner, unpublished translation of an interview with Malam Mahmudu, Hausa Poet, 15-16.

[135]*Ibid.*

[136]See David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), Abner Cohen, *Two-Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976) and Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).

[137]Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 82. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'Etat: Grands corps et grand écoles* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1989) and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of*

Conclusion

By tracing the history of individual slaves and their time in office, the relationships some slaves had with individual emirs of Kano are placed in a more detailed, historical context. Such an approach provides an empirical basis to document changes in that relationship as new emirs came into power, and as new slaves came into office. The impact dynamic individuals had on the general nature of the royal slave system, and on the functions, status and influence of specific offices is also hightlighted. Individuals such as Ibrahim Barka, Salam, Nuhu, Harisu, Jatau, Nasamu and Isa often interpreted their positions and offices in dramatically different ways. Given the fact that the scope of slave offices was not rigidly ascribed, we can look to the roles of individual slaves in determining changes in the slave hierarchy and the slave community of nineteenth century Kano. The "informal" power wielded by slaves, as advisors and confidants, was as important than the "formal" powers they exercised through their offices. They did not serve on "formal" councils of state, but operated outside those councils, and beginning with Dabo, met with the emir at the *fada* and at other moments when only they had access to his ear. They guarded Dabo's person, and his image, because, as slaves, they were permitted access to the royal personage to which few others could aspire.

Practice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). See also John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Post-Colonial Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

While the concept of "titles" or "title-holding" defined the basis upon which the system operated, the actual conduct of political life was informed by personal relationships located inside the household of the emir. They served as a means for the emir to extend his own personal control of government and administration. The emir ruled the state through his household, and through kin and clientage relationships emanating from that household. Their power and authority developed in conjunction with relationships of kinship, clientage and slavery which emanated from that central household. Promotion did not always follow a prescribed course. Slaves acceded to new offices and higher ranks based on the quality of their relationship with the emir, as a result of their own networks of influence and patronage inside the emir's household, and due to their abilities in warfare and administration. Patterns of slave power and the nature of slave careers have also been examined in this context. Slave careers were normally tied to the reign of a single emir, who served as that slave's patron. In turn, the emir relied on slaves with whom he had developed relationships of trust. These slaves were usually forced from power after the death of their patron; indeed, in this way the consolidation of slave power was curtailed.

In arguing that offices were historically mutable, I do not intend to suggest that royal slaves operated beyond institutionalized constraints and norms. Royal slavery in Kano was "formal" and institutionalized. As I have indicated, the basis of this *mamluk* system was introduced by Ibrahim Dabo, who departed from some of the precedents set by his

predecessor, Emir Suleiman. He employed slaves in formal, titled offices, used them as state functionaries, and to enforce court protocol. As advisors, slaves monopolized information and determined policy. The management of agricultural estates, the collection of taxation, and their service as soldiers were central features of royal slave power as reconstituted by Dabo. Dabo relied on royal slaves to over-awe and intimidate his political opponents, and he therefore created units of royal slave soldiers. Later emirs armed contingents of royal slaves with muskets. The system was based on systematic recruitment and socialization into a mamluk-style system. This system was further revised and developed by Dabo's successors: Usman Maje Ringim, Abdullahi Maje Karofi, Muhammad Bello, Tukur and Aliyu Babba.

Finally, this chapter has indicated that in Dabo's time royal slaves were still slaves. Slave status was continually reinforced by a variety of symbolic and cultural processes initiated by Dabo. Most importantly, they were subject to deposition and execution at the whim of the emir. Although the emir had to exercise restraint, many did nonetheless depose a large number of officials whom they deemed disloyal. The slave status of royal slaves was inscribed on their bodies: they bore distinctive marks, names and clothing. While some of these distinctions could disappear with time, slaves were more vulnerable to the vagaries of political competition than the free-born. Should a royal slave lose his title, he effectively lost his ability to manage land, confiscate property and provide for his household, who

usually left him to join a more prosperous title-holder. Over the course the the nineteenth-century the individuals discussed above gradually created a more coherent and structured royal slave "community." Indeed, Ibrahim Barka's slave progeny dominated the title of *dan rimi* throughout the nineteenth century. In short, the positions and titles held by individuals evolved into royal slave institutions. Likewise, royal slave households became centres of royal slave training and socialization. It is to the formation, evolution and character of the royal slave community that we will now turn.

Chapter Three

Kinship, Households and Royal Slave Families in the Kano Palace

Bawa ba ya gasa da da
[A slave and free man do not compete]

Abokin sarki sarki ne
[A friend of a King is a King][1]

Introduction: Kinship, Family, and Royal Slave "Consciousness" in Kano

This chapter explores the creation of a royal slave community in Kano. It focuses on the development of a royal slave culture grounded in the elaboration and creation of slave family and kinship networks. Overall, it investigates the nature of royal slave consciousness as expressed in the cultural and social world of slave officialdom that emerged during the nineteenth century. Nineteenth century royal slave culture provided the elite slave community with economic support, and encouraged the development of customary rights and obligations which secured their own privileged positions in the official hierarchy. Royal slaves carved out for themselves a meaningful political and social position in the palace, a world which served their interests, aims, and needs. This was a complex process. The ideology and practice of royal slavery became a highly contested domain in the nineteenth century. Negotiations about the form, conduct and

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[1]C.E.J. Whitting, *Hausa and Fulani Proverbs*, 87 and 97.

nature of Islam, sexuality, family-kinship relations, master-slave relations, and clientage were conducted and debated in this domain. The participants included the free-born aristocracy, the emir, and the royal slaves themselves. These were not singular, monolithic groups, but were composed of individuals and groups of individuals, sometimes with contradictory interests and aims. Royal slaves attempted to alter the boundaries and definitions of slave status in order to gain more influence and power, while the elite fought to keep these same demands in check. Royal slaves were dependent upon the emir for their place and positions in officialdom, yet by virtue of their positions they acquired the ability and opportunities to resist his demands. This tension lay at the heart of royal slavery in Kano and throughout much of the Islamic world.

A wide variety of individuals held royal slave offices in the nineteenth century. The aims and conduct of individual royal slaves had an important effect on the evolution of the institution and on the manner in which royal slaves perceived themselves, as well as how they were perceived by others. While royal slaves had obvious interests in accommodating themselves to the ruling elite, their accommodation should be understood in human terms; that is, in the power negotiations and relations, the push and pull between master and slave that defined and informed slavery in practice, as opposed to slavery in the broader and more abstract realms of theory and ideology. Slaves were human beings as well as property. This meant that slaves could and did negotiate and struggle against the terms of their

bondage. In so doing, slaves generally acted in their own perceived best interest, and the power that some royal slaves were able to wield over other slaves and free-men presents a dramatic contrast to slaves who laboured in the fields and towns to produce food and goods for their masters. The options and choices available to ordinary slaves, ranging on the continuum between outright resistance and complete accommodation, were significantly limited in comparison to royal slaves.[2] However, while ordinary slaves used their status as "property" to resist the demands of their masters and their exploitation, royal slaves tended to rely less on their value as property and instead used their power and influence, fundamental components of their *royal* slave status, as means to resist their masters, or, more commonly, to ameliorate their living conditions. Whereas ordinary slaves "struck at their identity as things"[3] and challenged the proprietary rights exercised over them, royal slaves could challenge their masters by virtue of their position, power and status as royal slaves. Certainly royal slaves were still valued as property, but they could better exploit their own specialized skills and access to power than could ordinary slaves. Nevertheless, in the case of Kano, and the Sokoto Caliphate in general, royal slaves tended to accommodate themselves to the status quo rather than challenge it outright.

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[2]For more on slave resistance and control, see Paul E Lovejoy, "Problems of Slave Control in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *Africans in Bondage: Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986) and Paul E. Lovejoy, "Fugitive Slaves: Resistance to Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate" in Gary Y. Okihiro (ed.), *In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean, and Afro-American History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986).

[3]Lovejoy, "Fugitive Slaves," 72.

Throughout the nineteenth century, a succession of emirs gave their royal slaves incentives and privileges that won them over, indeed, co-opted them, to the side of the aristocracy. Royal slaves as a group were committed to preserving their own privileges and position by perpetuating the slave system in Kano. As a result, royal slaves identified their interests with those of the ruling elite, so much so that they came to represent the authority of the state and the emir to commoners and regular slaves in Kano and beyond. This accommodation with the ruling elite did not mean that royal slaves were passive; rather, they took advantage of their positions to secure their place in the palace, and to develop the means to resist their masters should their own positions in the official hierarchy be threatened.

By the mid-nineteenth century, royal slave households became political and social spaces in which the royal slave system reproduced itself. The networks of kin and clients royal slaves developed ensured their power as a community was not fragmented. Royal slaves never succeeded, however, in assimilating with the free elite. The relationship between office-holders was mediated through kinship; indeed, political life in Kano was informed by the language and nature of family and lineage relationships. Free officials had large lineages on which to rely for support; they had access to networks of relationships by birth and marriage which helped them to gain their official positions and to balance the autocratic power of the emir. Kinship helped to determine the process of succession and the length

of tenure in office.[4] Over the course of the nineteenth century, certain official titles became the prerogative of particular lineages. Individual members of these families competed for titles, supported by groups of other lineage members. Fathers and sons, uncles and brothers all had access to officialdom, and the networks of supporters drawn from their extended families and clients was the basis of political power. Dynasties could and did develop, based on the influence and status of individual members. Influence and prominence was partially based on an individual's agnatic descent. For example, two brothers could have very different statuses based on differences of maternity, while their own sons would be differentiated on the basis of their father's rank and status.[5]

Royal slaves largely operated outside these lineage relationships. As the antithesis of "kin" slaves were unable to mobilize lineage-based political support. In theory, they had no corporate support on which to draw, and were therefore wholly dependent upon the emir Slaves aspired to be and have "kin" but were denied many of the benefits kinship relationships conferred. This chapter takes a middle ground in the debate on power and elite slavery: I argue that elite slaves were indeed slaves and that they were profoundly marked by their status.

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[4]Richard P. Brady, *Hierarchy and Authority Among the Hausa, with Special Reference to the Period of the Sokoto Caliphate in the Nineteenth Century* (D.Phil., unpublished, Oxford University, 1978), 4. For a general discussion of pre and post jihad government see Sa'ad Abubakar, "The Emirate-Type Government in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. VII, No. 2 (June 1974), 211-229.

[5]M. G. Smith, "The Hausa System of Social Status" in *Africa* 29 (1959), 239-251; M. G. Smith, "Historical and Cultural Conditions of Political Corruption Among the Hausa" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6, 2 (1964), 164-194; M. G. Smith, "Hausa Inheritance and Succession" in J. Duncan M. Derrett (ed.), *Studies in Laws of Succession in Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 230-281 and Brady, 84.

They were thus more completely subject to the royal will or prerogative than were persons of free descent. But, this did not prevent them from constructing ideologies and cultures of power and family that were vital, sustainable and meaningful in their own communities.

As indicated in Chapter Two, during the reign of Ibrahim Dabo royal slavery developed from a system consisting of a few individual slaves attached to the emir into a more elaborate, institutional and formal royal slave, or *mamluk*, system. The establishment of slave households was the primary means slaves partially, and often ambiguously, overcame the disabilities that slave status imposed upon them. They developed a system of household recruitment, apprenticeship and kinship that gave them more control over the appointment of subordinate slaves as well as influence in the royal household via their kinship ties with royal concubines. In short, as the inheritance of power (although not necessarily titles) became more common, royal slave families increased their control over certain positions. Although a number of titles were never inheritable, holders of these titles either created or bestowed other slave titles on their progeny and clients. Individuals expanded the scope and range of the activities they could participate in, and in so doing they also expanded the size and power of their own households. In short, "socially isolated" individual royal slaves developed households and families through which they exercised political power and influence.

From Individuals to Community, c. 1819-1855

Royal slaves represent a sharp contrast to Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff's integrative or assimilationist model of African slavery.[6] The elite needed royal slave status to result in social differentiation between free and slave, not the eventual integration of slave and free. The designation of *bayin sarki* or slave of the king was used to enforce and define the marginal status of "royal slave" individuals. As discussed in Chapter One, they were only valuable and useful to the emir if they were actually slaves. They were then unable to compete for the throne, free-titles or inherit property. Newly captured slaves from outside Kano, as well as young slaves born into slavery, were integrated into slave culture and society by the palace slave community. In this sense, royal slaves were part of an integrative process. However, this process did not aim to integrate slaves into free kinship networks and families, but to assimilate them into royal slave households and families. On the whole, this encouraged the development of a slave aristocracy that was both isolated from and intertwined with the free-born aristocracy. The royal slave community was not divorced from the cultural and social world of the aristocracy, but borrowed and adapted its symbols, language, and social

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[6]Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, "African 'Slavery' as an Institution of Marginality" in Miers and Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 3-81.

organization. Certainly, the system served the needs of the masters, but it also served the needs of the slaves themselves.

The contradictions and conflict implicit in the relationship between royal slaves and the emir is reflected in traditions about *Dan Rimi* Ibrahim Barka. Although his career has been examined in another context in Chapter Two, Ibrahim Barka also serves as a personification of royal slave political tradition and the ideology of royal slave officialdom as it evolved between 1819 and 1855. These oral traditions also reflect the complexity and ambiguity that lay at the heart of the relationship between Barka and Dabo. This relationship in turn provides insight into the social, political and cultural issues that were subjects of contestation and negotiation between the slave and free communities inside the *gidan sarki*. Initially, the key to Barka's position and power lay in his special and very close relationship with Ibrahim Dabo. As demonstrated in Chapter One, it was because Barka was initially without lineage support that Dabo was able to grant him substantial political power. More generally, this tradition suggests that the royal slave system was still undeveloped throughout much of Dabo's reign. In this context, Barka's history demonstrates that royal slaves had yet to create households through which they could mobilize clients and dispense patronage. Barka's early career thus symbolizes the nature of the early royal slave system which was mediated through the "king as master" and "slave as kinless servant" dynamic. It also undercores just how important the personal relationship between emir

and slave was for individuals in the royal slave community.[7] Influence was not always gained through an office, but through an individual's ability to influence the opinions and policies of the emir. Certainly, the opportunity could only be gained by possessing office, but the offices in and of themselves had little role in determining what and who became influential with the emir:

> You ask which of the Emir's Councillors we would mostly go to if we had some important matter to bring up. Well, it would be the one with the most arziki [success, good results]. He would be the important one, and he would be the one who would hear most matters. A man like him might bring some ten matters before the Emir in one day, whereas another man might only take two, or yet another only one matter to the Emir. Yes, each man had differing abilities. No, this was not a matter of inherited tradition, but which of the councillors was most effective. For among the men in the Emir's court, there are great ones and there are small ones, but all of them have access to the Emir. But still, their value varies greatly.[8]

Dabo came to rely on Barka's advice and company long before 1819; indeed, one tradition even relates that Barka lived in the house of Malam Isma'ila, the senior brother of the Ibrahim Dabo.[9] Thus, Barka's pedigree also includes the existence of a personal relationship with Dabo *outside* of their relationship as king and slave. This is a

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[7]British officials observed a similar ideology in other emirates: "Jarma Abdu, a slave of the last Emir is aged about 45, he is a Ba-Ningi and a favourite of the present Emir who is said to have promised him the district of the present Sarikin Bai in course of time. In consequence of this his one object in life is to please the Emir by all means in his power and though possessed of a very ready and plausible tongue he has little ability. He is much given to crooked practices to the Emir's advantage and he is also somewhat in the position of 'Chief Procurer' to the Court." NAK SNP 7/13 6824/1912. See the marginal note: "maintenance of loyalty to King-hope of promotion."

[8]Neil Skinner, unpublished translation of an interview with Malam Mahmadu, Hausa Poet. Mahmadu's father and grandfather were both Malams. His grandfather, Adhmama, lived during the time of Usman dan Fodio, while his father Dayyibu lived during the reign of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi.

[9]Interview with Malam Da'u Aliyu Kwaru, conducted and cited by Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 58.

reflection of the importance of "household" ties between emir and slave and leads to a number of questions: how were these "household" ties established? What forms did they take? How did the system function in practice?

Abdullahi dan Fodio is said to have told Barka that God would bless him with a large family. He also warned Barka that his family would suffer at the hands of the emirs, who would try to "eliminate" them. However, in the end they would be unable to do so: "You will live with the emirs of [the] *habe* and then [the] Fulani and all their parents will be from your family because most of their rulers will come out from your descendants."[10] The locus of the social and political conflict between the free-born elite and the royal slave community was over the control of royal slave physical and social reproduction. The tradition reflects the attempts by the aristocracy to control the progeny (the families) of royal slaves, who were increasingly viewed as a threat to the power of the emir, in particular after the reign of Dabo came to an end, because the existence of royal slave families encouraged the integration and consolidation of the royal slave community. Likewise, the story suggests that royal slave households were used by some families to manipulate their ties with royalty to ensure they would develop the all important "special" relationship of trust and obligation with the emir. This was crucial because power was based on personal influence. Both of these developments help to illustrate the

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[10]Interview with Wada Dako 21 February 1998.

increasing size, power and coherence of the royal slave system during the reign of Ibrahim Dabo to Abdullahi Maje Karofi:

> The Emir Abdullahi went out of Kano to conduct many wars of conquest, in Ningi especially, and as a result captured many slaves. The slaves in the palace were more powerful as there were many more slaves in the palace who were put under existing slaves. If [before Abdullahi] *shamaki* was running with 100 slaves, during the reign of Abdullahi he might be running with 1,000. So *shamaki* must be a very powerful person.[11]

Indeed, the royal slave community was firmly entrenched as an "institution" by reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi. Abdullahi wielded tremendous power, in large part because he relied on his royal slaves for political support. According to some oral traditions, the *bayin sarki* secured Abdullahi's appointment as emir at the point of their swords. In 1855 the *Waziri* Abdulkadiri came to Kano from Sokoto with a letter announcing the appointment of a new emir. However, Abdullahi came to believe that he would not be named as the successor. He therefore gathered together a group of heavily armed royal slaves and entered the central mosque where the *masu sarauta* were gathered to hear *Waziri* Abdulkadiri formally read the letter of appointment. As the *Waziri* was reading the letter, Abdullahi (or one of his slaves) seized it, and then stated that he had been made emir. *Waziri* Abdulkadiri, and the rest of Kano officialdom, had little choice in the matter, given the fact that the royal slaves were brandishing weapons. As a result, Abdullahi had to rely heavily on his royal slaves and granted them privileges and power beyond that which they had known previously. Throughout his reign,

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[11]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

he used these royal slaves against his enemies because he could not rely on his kin.[12] This tradition once again emphasizes that royal slaves had a "special" relationship with the emir, based on the fact that they were outside the politics of kinship and could be used to counter the influence of free officialdom. The power of royal slaves and the emir mutually reinforced one another. Yet, there was also conflict between royal slaves and the emir. According to oral informants, Abdullahi dealt swiftly and harshly with any opposition from the royal slave community. Upon his succession, Abdullahi had *Shamaki* Ahoda or Isa executed, probably because he refused to support his seizure of power.[13]

While royal slavery was initially revived by Dabo as a means to control the politics of lineage, it increasingly took on a life of its own. This progression is remembered through the personage of *Dan Rimi* Barka, who, as representative of the "generic" royal slave community, found two ways to reach beyond the king-slave dynamic: through the development of royal slave households and concubinage [Hausa: *kwarkwara*].

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[12]*Ibid.* Smith recounts a similar, although more detailed, tradition. See also Malam Adamu Na Ma'aji, *Ta'rikh Kano.* See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 264.

[13]Smith claims it was *Shamaki* Isa. See *Government in Kano*, 275. Both the *Kano Chronicle* and *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu* claim that a *Shamaki* named Nasamu was alive during the reign of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi. However, the author of the *Taqyid al-Akhbar* claims that MaiGari was *Shamaki* after the execution of Isa or Ahoda. M. G. Smith provides a similar chronology see *Government in Kano*, 295 and Chapter Two.

Households, Families and Political Power: c. 1855-1903

Claude Meillassoux has argued that royal slaves were only able to develop households because they were not inserted into society primarily for "economic use."[14] Because they were slaves, and according to Meillassoux were therefore kinless, they could be used for political, non-reproductive functions. The slaves economic position was thereby transformed, as they no longer were maintaining a master but were maintained by him. As a consequence, royal slaves had more opportunity to develop familial structures because their physical reproduction was not simply a question of profit and loss for their master. However, Meillassoux then states that slaves could only construct the "appearance" of family." This "cell" which surrounded royal slaves was a "reversible privilege which distinguished such a slave from others and tied him even more strongly to his master." In short, because royal slaves were slaves, they were unable to make these cells

> function as an organism which could help [them] build up a family and a patrimony, since [their] very state meant that [they were] dispossessed of [their] genesic or material product, [they] had no rights over [their] progeny . . . the armed slave was still socially sterile . . . no links were created between generations.[15]

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[14]Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 172-173.

[15]Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 173. This view is also criticized by Jonathon Glassman; see Jonathon Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes: The Contradictory Consciousness of Slave Resistance on the Swahili Coast" and Jonathon Glassman, "No Words of their Own."

In contrast, royal slaves in Kano developed a system based on slave "houses" [Hausa: *gida*; *gidaje*] which served functions similar to those of aristocratic families. These slave houses were organizational centres where royal slaves mobilized their own clients, and, in some cases, sons. They were not simply "cells", but functional social units which allowed royal slaves to partially overcome their slave status and develop lineage relationships. The following pages explore how these royal slave households functioned in practice.

Members of the royal slave community were divided into two general groups: the first generation, newly captured slaves [Hausa: *bawa*; *bayi*], and second generation slaves, born of slave parents [Hausa: *bacucane*; *cucanawa*]. New slaves were usually war captives.[16] During war, any of the enemy who proved too aggressive and fierce were killed (tradition has it that they were taken to "Dandawa" where they were eaten by cannibals). Others were sent to the palace, the homes of aristocrats, or the plantations of the elite. Those who were sent to the palace and proved themselves loyal were given a horse, a room and other necessities.[17] The renaming of newly captured slaves was an integral part of the process of incorporating them into the palace community. Common slave names included Nasamu, Allabura, Nagode, Albarka, Allah Kyauta and Arziki.[18] Second generation slaves had special status inside the palace and were given the designation *cucanawa* to

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[16]See, for example: interviews with Alhaji Garba Sarkin Gida, 14 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and Isyaku, 17 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[17]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[18]Interview with Hauwa, 11 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* The informant was herself purchased from her mistress by *Makaman Kano* Aminu, District Head of Wudil. See also interview with Malam Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

distinguish them from slaves who were recently captured. The *cucanawa* valued their high status in relation to other slaves. The word *cucanawa* was likely related to the word *cucananaci* meaning "impudent" or "shameless effrontery and familiarity."[19]

> . . . they can never cheat us, because if they cheat us they are cheating themselves. They are also called *cucanawa*, that means if you cheat me you are cheating yourself. That is the source of our joking, they are our grandfathers and they are the grandchildren of our fathers.[20]

Another interpretation of *cucanawa* is tied to the notion of being cheated. Some royal slaves felt that they had been "cheated" out of their rightful inheritance because they were born slaves.[21] Oral data suggests that the *cucanawa* did behave in an off-hand or familiar way with the sons of royalty because in many respects they regarded themselves as the equals of the aristocracy.[22] They considered themselves highly favoured because of the trust or *amana* that the emir placed in them; a trust that many felt he was not able to vest in his own sons. Status as a *cucanawa* existed independently of any particular slave-title. As such, it was an important component of royal slave identity, and served as a cultural resource from which royal slaves drew a significant amount of prestige and power.[23] To be *cucanawa* gave royal slaves access to relationships inside the palace to

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[19]The definition is taken from G. P. Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary.*
[20]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 June 1996.
[21]Interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998.
[22]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996.
[23] See W. Arens and Ivan Karp (eds.), *Creativity of Power: Cosmology and Action in African Societies* (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1989), xiv.

which very few free-born men could aspire. Although they were slaves, a ram would be slaughtered during the naming ceremony of a young *bacucane*, which was paid for by their master.[24] As second generation slaves, *cucanawa* could make demands on their masters that used the idioms of kinship. This slave naming ritual served as a form of "symbolic kinship," and reflected the social importance of establishing family ties and relationships. Because a ram was slaughtered for a slave, as it would be for a son, *cucanawa* could claim to inhabit a social space closer to the free-born than slave.

Yet, they were still slaves. The emphasis on belonging to a family or lineage unit (embodied by the sacrifice of a ram) further exemplifies the importance of kinship networks as well as the fact that even *royal* slaves were isolated from these networks. When Allah Bar Sarki was deposed after being given the title of *waziri*, which was normally reserved for free-born officials, he was stripped of his *alkyabba* robe and forced to wear only the loin-cloth in public.[25] After literally and symbolically stripping Allah Bar Sarki of his position, the Emir is reputed to have told the assembled crowd that had Allah Bar Sarki not been wearing the slave loin-cloth he would have been executed.[26] Another version depicts a similar public humiliation based on the removal of the symbolic manifestations of state power, a visible

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[24]Interview with Malam Muhammadu, 9 October 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[25]Interviews with *Dan Masanin Kano* Maitama Sule, 28 January 1996 and Aliyu Waziri, 27 February 1996. This episode has been extensively explored; see Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "C.L. Temples Notes on the History of Kano," Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki" and C.N. Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate.*
[26]Interview with *Dan Masanin Kano* Maitama Sule, 28 January 1996.

affirmation of the emir's own position and power, and an enforced exclusion from the royal household and the *gidan sarki*:

> The Emir went to Bompai. He [the Resident/Governor] went there and met him. They sat there together with *Waziri* and *Ciroma* and *Alkali*. Then the Governor said to him, well, Emir there is your slave. Whatever you want to do with him you can go and do it. From there he ordered that his turban be removed. He went out and rode his horse. And he [Allah Bar Sarki] did *dagumu* [put/secured the sleeves of his gown behind his neck]. The Emir was riding his horse and he [Allah Bar Sarki] following him on foot showering epithets to the Emir (from Bompai to the Palace). When they reached home, the Emir left him at the field of *Kofar Kudu*. He stayed there for seven days. He was sleeping there at the field.[27]

Allah Bar Sarki's status as a slave had thus been reinforced for all Kano to observe. However, the benefits of *royal* slave status had also been removed. Allah Bar Sarki's exile from the palace ensured that he would have no access to the slave networks of kinship and family that were so vital to royal slave power and authority. He was indeed symbolically "kinless."

Royal slaves in general were not isolated from their own kinship networks. Barka's personal history demonstrates that the development of royal slave "families" helped the *bayin sarki* overcome their social isolation. By the mid-nineteenth century, the sons of senior slaves could and did follow their fathers to positions of power. However, lineage affiliation did not guarantee succession because many slave titles were open to the general palace community. Thus, the sons of slaves were trained by their fathers, but were often given titles that were different from those held by their fathers. According

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[27]Interview with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

to *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru: "An office can be inherited or anybody can be given an office, if god says you will be appointed you will even if you don't inherit it. It is a matter of luck, anybody can be appointed."[28]

By the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi (and possibly even earlier), slaves had re-established families or houses of their own inside and near the *gidan sarki.* Of course, slaves had occupied physical houses in the palace long before the *jihad.* But, *gida* is also a conceptual term. The concept of royal slave *gidaje* or houses came to be used as the means to create real and fictitious bonds of kinship amongst the royal slave community. Gradually, these slave houses came to be regarded as extended families, whose members were known as *Shamakawa* [people of *shamaki*], *Rimawa* [people of *dan rimi*] or *Sallamawa* [people of *sallama*]. Later in the nineteenth century, the *Shettimawa* became a fourth important family which was founded by the first *shettima,* Shekarau. Members were those who could claim a blood tie with someone in the household, or, were newly captured palace slaves, who were "adopted" and placed under the care of one of the top three slaves: the *shamaki, dan rimi,* or *sallama.*[29] Free clients also attached themselves to these houses as a means to gain access to positions as *jakadu* (royal messengers or tax-collectors). These were very lucrative

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[28]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996

[29]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996, *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996, *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998, *Kilishi* Mohammad Nasiru, 2 August 1996 and *Turakin Shamaki* Mohammad, 16 August 1996. See also interviews with *Galadiman Lifida* Mohammad Lawal, 19 August 1996, *Dan Iya* Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996 and *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

positions in the nineteenth century, and were mainly under the control of the top three slave officials.[30]

Moreover, during the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi, royal slaves began marrying free Fulani women, unions which Abdullahi was reluctant to abrogate for political considerations.[31] Other oral data suggest that the marriages were used by Abdullahi Maje Karofi to reward his royal slaves.[32] Certainly, the royal slave community was given the opportunity to expand and formalize kinship ties beyond the world of the slaves into the domain of the free. This was indeed a remarkable privilege, and serves as an important indication of the power that many royal slaves wielded during the reign of Maje Karofi. In general, however, slaves married other slaves. The more powerful slaves also took numerous concubines. Royal slaves were expected to ask the permission of the emir or one of the senior slaves before negotiating a marriage.

The heads of slave households were conceptualized as descendants of the first slave to hold the title. They were then referred to as the "father" of the slave title in question:

> The first *shamaki* was Ahoda. He was the father of all *shamakis* in Kano whether they were related or not, and they were not related of course. Even the praise singers praising *shamaki* must link his genealogy to Ahoda . . . Ahoda [was] father of the title. Any *shamaki* is referred to as *magajin* or successor of Ahoda. But

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[30]Interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 21 November 1995 and Chapter Four. See also Tijani Garba, "Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates, c. 1860-1930" and Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, "Taxation and the Hakimai's Envoys: The Status of the Ribats of Rano, Karaye, Babura, Gwarzo and their Resident Rulers within the Administrative System of Kano Emirate" in B. M. Barkindo (ed.), *Kano and Some of Her Neighbours*, 79-94.

[31]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 295.

[32]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

> this house is Barka, that house is Ahoda. Any *dan rimi* is referred to as *magajin* Barka.[33]

According to most data, Ahoda was not the first *shamaki*, but the second. He was uniformly remembered as extremely powerful, and some traditions name him as the son of Nasamu, but this is doubtful. Who is called the "father" of a particular title depended less on who was actually first than on who was powerful and thus established a reputation and position in the royal slave community.[34] The head of the household's major responsibility was to provide opportunities for those under him to acquire power and wealth. He was the source of economic prosperity for his household, and his ability to garner favours from the emir was therefore extremely important, as it was the emir who ensured that royal slave households were provided with clothing and food:

> Yes, he [the emir] used to feed everybody because everybody depended on the emir, there was no work to do because in my household you will find about twenty slaves under my control and they all depended on me for feeding and other things.[35]

The palace was occupied by royal slave families, who lived in compounds with their extended families and clients. They were fed from the produce of royal slave plantations [Hausa *gandu*; *gandaye*] which were under the general supervision of the *shamaki*, *dan rimi* or

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[33]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.
[34]*Ibid.*
[35]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996 and 19 March 1998. See also interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998.

sallama. Households were thus viewed as social units which ate or "consumed" together; indeed, each household was given food from the central palace stores.[36]

> During Sallah there was a sacrifice we used to do, where you gave some food to the needy according to the amount of people there are under you. So we used to count our people and the emir gave the pan to me. I am the one who will measure the food and distribute it to the needy. Whenever the *Sarkin Hatsi* is appointed the pan and the knife which the emir used to slaughter the ram during the Sallah is given to him [the *Sarkin Hatsi*], these are the properties he will keep and use as needed.[37]

Grains and other foodstuffs brought to the palace from royal agricultural estates were administered and supervised by the royal slave community. The senior slaves managed these plantations through their slave subordinates from the Kano palace.[38] Likewise, the *sarkin hatsi* was responsible for supervising the storage of grain,[39]

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[36]Of course, household units were not always confined to those who ate out of the same pot. In the palace, members of one household could indeed eat with another. But, in general and conceptual terms, membership in a household, in the palace at least, was created and defined by one's access to the "produce" and protection of that household, as embodied by the household leader or head.

[37]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998. See also Neil Skinner, unpublished translation of an interview with Malam Mahmudu, Hausa Poet, 81-82. Formerly, the *jakadu* and the emir's slaves collected taxes, including the *zakka.* The *jakadu* would say to the local Malams associated with them: "I give you twenty bundles of corn. They're in such and such a village, where you must go and fetch them." The Malams then went to the village, collected the corn, had the women thresh it, and then brought it 'home' on donkeys. There was no need for the Malam to prove his identity, as the *jakada* would have left it with a trustworthy man in village, and the only way people not from village could have known the village man had the corn was from the *jakada.*

[38]The senior slaves visited the estates under their control periodically. These lands were not just sources of food for the palace, but also one means through which royal slaves could exercise their authority, as they punished disobedient subordinates by banishing them to the harder life of *gandu* slavery. See, for example: interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and interview with *Galidiman Rumbu* Mohammadu Yalwa, 29 July 1996. See also Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate" and Paul E. Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate."

[39]For a description of granaries, see Olive Temple, "Notes for a Handbook of Northern Nigeria," The Temple Papers, MSS Afr. s. 1531, *Rhodes House Library.* See also Nast,

while the *uwar soro* and the *sarkin hatsi* generally ensured grain was distributed throughout the palace community.[40] Food for the emir and his household came from the central palace kitchens, while royal slave households were given allotments of grain to be prepared by women within their own households.[41] The emir was given special food, including milk and meat.[42] When asked whether in the past food was distributed from one pot to the rest of the palace, *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani stated:

> No, everybody cooked his food and fed his people. Those inside the emir's household ate inside his household. But we used to feed the people who are under us. Q. But the emir is the one to give the food to them? A. Yes, at that time the food was very cheap and there is availability of food.[43]

For most of the population of Kano, however, food was not always plentiful in the nineteenth century.[44] Although *zakka* grain could be

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"Space, History and Power," 120 for a description of grain distribution.

[40]See interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998: "When the food reached the palace the *sarkin hatsi* is the one who will keep the food in the *rumbu* (granary). That time we don't know anything like rice or maize and ground-nut is for the animals. We used to cultivate millet and corn and whenever food is needed I would be called and I assigned people to carry the food into the household." See also interview with *Galadiman Rumbu* Mohammad Yalwa, 29 July 1996.

[41]According to Mack, female slaves working in the central kitchens provided cooked food for the entire palace community; only recently has food been prepared in smaller locations and dispersed throughout the palace. While my data attest to the importance of the central kitchens, it also indicates that some of the actual cooking was done within royal slave households. I did not, however, have access to female residents of the palace to confirm this impression. See Beverly B. Mack, "Service and Status: Slaves and Concubines in Kano, Nigeria" in Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen (eds.), *At Work in Homes* (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1990), 13-34. See also interviews with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995 and *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998. However, the *Galadiman Rumbu*, 29 July 1996, stated that some food was brought out to the various houses already cooked.

[42]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998.

[43]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998.

[44]On famine, see Michael Watts, *Silent Violence: Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria.*

used to alleviate food shortages, if the palace ran short the *zakka*[45] grains would never reach commoners in need.[46] *Zakka* grain was sometimes consumed by the *jakadu* who collected them; royal slaves themselves used their ability to control *zakka* as another source of income. Although Dr. Cargill, then the Resident of Kano Province, had a series of self-interested reasons to exaggerate the extent of extortion, he was nonetheless correct that *zakka* was an important source of grain for some royal slave households and their retainers:

> In brief, the chief causes of the failure of the last assessment were that the peasantry of the district, always a truculent ignorant lot, resented any change or interference with the customs of centuries; that many of them were anxious to pay their 'ZAKKA' on religious or pious grounds; that many of them saw in the new scheme an end to their habitual concealment of the true amount of their harvests that their minds and scruples were worked up by an interested portion of the 'Palace Clique' in Kano, who saw their means of living (both by extortion, on the ZAKKA grain, and on 'Hurumi'-'Chaffa' exemptions) being removed by a rigorous systematised amalgamation; and not least that this assessment was in excess , not only of what had ever been returned as the taxation, but of what had been paid altogether in taxation, robbery, and extortion, to and by the Jekada fraternity.[47]

At the end of Ramadan, the emir ordered stored grain to be divided and distributed in the palace as family alms. The recipients in the main were royal slave families, not just individuals:

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[45]The collection of *zakka* was and is a highly charged political issue. Most informants initially stated that *zakka* was collected by the Malams because it was their religious responsibility. However, it soon became apparent in some interviews that royal slaves also played an important role in the collection and/or distribution of *zakka*. See for example: interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998 and *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996: "When the time of *zakka* come, the emir will bring his slave together with his *jakada,* to go and collect the *zakka.*"

[46]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998.

[47]NAK SNP 6/4 c.111/1908. Indeed, the *zakka* sometimes never reached the emir, see *ibid.*: ". . . but a large amount of it [*zakka*] was taken and consumed by the Jekada gang." See also NAK SNP 6/5 44/1909.

> Every slave of the Emir, his children, servants and family (women) including horses will be given family alms from the grains brought by the settlements of Gogel, Giwaran and Madarin Taba. The slave community in the past was large, in each of Gidan Dan Rimi, Shamaki and Sallama, for example, there were 1,000 slaves. All were given family alms, including their children. Each person was mentioned one after the other stating their number of children and the number was represented by pebbles, each person then had a specific measure set aside depending on the number of pebbles.[48]

As part of this process, Abdullahi Maje Karofi founded a male palace slave community located in the southern section of the palace, and opened a new southern palace gate called *kofar kudu*. These royal slaves, led by the *sarkin hatsi*, assumed positions related to the collection and distribution of grain that were formerly occupied by women. Likewise, the abode of the *mai shanu* [Hausa: master of cattle] was located near the southern gate where he managed and tended the emir's livestock.[49] Abdullahi Maje Karofi also settled a contingent of *dogarai* and *'yan silke*, or chain mail soldiers, near the new southern gate. While the extension and elaboration of the southern male slave realm documented by Nast was most certainly an attempt by Abdullahi to concentrate power in his own hands, it was not a radical a break with the past.[50] Abdullahi was in effect extending Dabo's own reforms, which aimed at concentrating power in his own household. The

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[48]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[49]"Engendering 'Space': State Formation and the Restructuring of Northern Nigeria's Kano Palace, 1807-1903" in *Historical Geography* Vol. 23, Nos. 1 and 2 (1993), 62-75, see especially, 69-71.

[50]M.G. Smith and many of my own informants claimed that both the *sarkin hatsi* and *sarkin dogarai* were important slave titles before the *jihad.* See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 98, Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 275-278 and interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

process of defining and creating slave titles continued after Dabo's reign, as a number of "free" titles came under the control of the slave community. The "new" southern slave community was organized along lines similar to the male slave households located in the northern section of the palace. They were grouped in households under the *sarkin hatsi* or *sarkin dogarai*.[51] These houses were in turn linked to the three male slave households in the northern section of the palace. The palace community in *kofar kudu* operated in essentially the same manner as the community located in the northern section of the palace. The *sarkin hatsi* was supervised by the senior royal slaves, and had no access to the emir except through them or the senior concubine or *'uwar soro*.[52] However, as some oral informants emphasize, the *sarkin hatsi* was also the head of his own independent household, from where he drew servants and other support. Slaves were raised and trained in his household and it gradually developed a unique identity. This in turn was tied to the economic reasons for the creation of *kofar kudu*:

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[51]The placement of body-guards near the palace was not an entirely new development; see Muhammad Al-Hajj (ed. and trans.), "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle on the Origins and Missionary Activities of the Wangara" originally titled "Waraqa maktuba fiha asl al-Wanqariyin al-muntasibin lil-shaikh Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Mohammed Qithima" in *Kano Studies* 4 (1968), 14: "And [Rumfa] gave Ahmadu, the elder son, a land in Duram and another near it as fiefs. He gave Sanadu a land near the palace called Rumji [where the Emir's bodyguards lived] and also another piece of land called Kunda . . . He hoped to make the pedigree run in one line [and that] his descendants be endowed with learning and be advisors to the sultans till the day of Resurrection."

[52]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 328.

> Sarkin Hatsi is an independent house in the past. There was no Sarkin Hatsi before, until the time of Maje Karofi, who built the house for Sarkin Hatsi and it became independent and we are working together with Uwar Soro, she will give [Sarkin Hatsi] order and also he will take orders from the Emir. Shamaki has a different duty to discharge, Sallama has a different duty and so also Sarkin Hatsi has his own part. Sarkin Hatsi is brought near the Emir's family in order to carry out any work that needs manpower in order to help the Emir inside the house.[53]

Oral evidence is contradictory about the exact reign in which the title of *sarkin hatsi* was revived.[54] The creation of *kofar kudu* was nevertheless tied to the development of royal slave estates which became an increasingly important source of food for the palace.[55] Grain from the various plantations surrounding the palace were first taken to one of the senior slaves in charge of the *gandu*, usually the *dan rimi, sallama* or *shamaki.* These slaves then sent the produce to the *sarkin hatsi* for storage in the palace.[56] A number of these estates had been in operation long before the reign of Abdullahi. Hugh Clapperton visited Fanisau in 1823, and Barth toured both Gogel and Fanisau in the 1850's.[57] Over the course of the nineteenth century more estates

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[53]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 31 December 1995. See also interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998. This point is also emphasized by Nast, "Space, History and Power."

[54]According Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari*, 38-39, the *sarkin hatsi* began distributing rams during the Sallah festival in the reign of Suleiman.

[55]However, *Gandun Nassarawa* specialized in the production of dairy products for the palace. The *mai shanu* also grazed palace cattle at the *Gandu* and according to some oral sources was responsible for its supervision; see interview with Gwadabe Maidawaki Dogari, 11 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and Philip J. Shea, "Approaching the Study of Production in Rural Kano" in Bawuro M. Barkindo (ed.), *Studies in the History of Kano* (Ibadan: Heinmann, 1983), 104. See also Sa'idu Abdulrazak Giginyu, "History of a Slave Village in Kano: Gandun Nassarawa (B.A. dissertation, unpublished, Bayero University, Kano, 1981).

[56]Interviews with Alahji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995, *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998 and *Galadiman Rumbu* Mohammad Yalwa, 29 July 1996.

[57]Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton and Walter Oudney, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries*, II, 275 and Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 609.

were founded, including Sawaina, Gasgainu, Yokanna, Giwaran, Nassarawa, Dorayi, Shanono, Wasai, Takai and Yukuna.[58] Thus, the scale of slave labour and food production increased in order to supply the palace establishment. The reliance on these slave plantations reduced the importance of grain purchased from Kurmi market, although there is evidence to suggest that the emir continued to purchase at least some grain from Kurmi through his royal slaves.[59]

We should picture, then, active, busy compounds, that were the centres of royal slave social relationships.[60] They were places where men no doubt met to discuss politics informally and where families were fed and raised. Quarrels, factionalism and intrigue also undoubtedly occurred in these spaces. The physical space occupied by these households was less important than the fact that slaves conceptually linked themselves together in these units, some more deeply than others. As indicated in Chapter Two, because it was difficult to distinguish between *cucanawa* and the sons of the emir, even outside the palace, Ibrahim Dabo began marking his *cucanawa*

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[58]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[59]Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 49, citing interview with Malam Da'u, 1 January 1990. See also interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani and Mahadi, "The State and the Economy." Furthermore, it is likely that even with supplies from the market and *gandaye* grains had to be imported from outside of the Emirate. See Philip James Shea, "The Development of an Export Oriented Dyed Cloth Industry" and NAK SNP 7 3095/1908: "I do not think that many people have ever realized how much corn is imported from the North. I had always looked upon Kano as self-supporting in this respect, but I find such is not the case. Not only are we now in Kano getting corn from the North but even from the Gwari country of W. Zaria."

[60]See, for example, Staudinger's description: ". . . an incredible number of children and people crowded into the inner courtrooms to gaze at us . . . One stout, determined lady, obviously some kind of higher servant . . . seized a broom, belaboured the laughing and shrieking crowd with it and then had a few of the outer doors closed." Paul Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, I, 215.

with *uku-uku* or "three-three" marks on their faces.[61] In this context, however, *uku uku* also came to identify members of the royal slave community; the marks were symbols not just of slave status, but of the power royal slaves could and did wield. Furthermore, they encouraged a broader, royal slave-based communal identification. Although Dabo ordered that the marks be given, the slave household-heads continued giving the marks afterwards.

When the slave household-head died, or was removed from office, his family and underlings often continued to work under the supervision of the newly appointed slave title-holder. They were, after all, members of the royal household.

> The one who is appointed by the Emir is the important one. Before, I was in that house but after my appointment as Sarkin Hatsi I moved to this house and left my people there and met other people here. And when I die another one will be appointed in three days or one week, this is the same in the house of Shamaki, Dan Rimi, Sallama or Sarkin Hatsi.[62]

They would sometimes leave should there be conflict, but if the new title-holder could provide for them, train them and ensure that they would have opportunities for further promotion, they often stayed. In some cases, when slaves moved to a new position they took their favourite clients and followers with them. When Allah Bar Sarki became powerful after moving from the office of *dan rimi* to *waziri*, he attracted a large following: "As I thought the Wuziri's [sic] Jakada informs me that he and most of what I formerly knew as the Emir's

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[61]Interview with Alhaji Yunusa, 26 March 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[62]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996

'boys' have gone over to the Wuziri [sic]. The reasons given are that in the old days they were under the then Dan Rimi and also that now, he as Wuziri [sic] is a very big man and that they are consequently better off than they would be with the Emir!!"[63] Certainly, the case of Allah Bar Sarki was exceptional, and must be seen in the context of the changes brought by colonial rule. Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century slaves did develop singular relationships with senior slaves based on access to patronage and power.

While it was certainly true that royal slave families could serve as a means to secure broader corporate support, the level and degree of lineage and client affiliation never reached the complexity and the depth that it did among the free-born aristocracy. If slaves were allowed access to the support of large lineages, families and clients, they would prove too serious a threat to the emirship.[64] When one of the senior royal slaves died, his property was transferred to his successor. Thus, when a slave died his house and other material possessions were not divided and distributed among his children but were seized by the emir and given to the next slave to hold the title. Garba Dogari, a slave captured at the age of seven during the reign of Aliyu, stated:

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[63]See NAK SNP 15/3 Acc. 394.

[64]Barth noted that marriage among "domestic slaves" was not encouraged, and believed that such slaves were "very rarely allowed to marry." See Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, I, 527.

> I was living with my parents when I was caught and taken to the emir's house as an official who is taking care of horses. Q. Do you own a farm which you inherited from your parent? A. A slave never inherits anything. I never inherited nothing like a house or farm. You would only be lucky when you are given such a thing as a present, but never inherit it.[65]

This policy effectively limited the ability of royal slaves to consolidate within their own lineages the material gains they had made during their careers (unless they had managed to secure the appointment of one of their own sons). It was also for this reason that two of the most important slave titles, *shamaki* and *sallama*, were not hereditary. These royal slaves were generally prevented from establishing family dynasties:

> We all live here. It was God who made us. Anybody can be picked and be made *sallama* and everybody must support him, and they have no relationship with other *sallamas*, everybody was a single family. It was only the house of *dan rimi* which has produced previous *dan rimis*. For example, six of us, one after the other, were from a single family. But *sallama*, it would be anybody that God wanted to elevate or appoint to the title of *sallama*. The house of *shamaki* is the same as the house of *sallama*, anybody can be appointed and they did not produce any previous *shamaki*.[66]

Royal slaves attempted to overcome this disability and found other means to ensure that their sons would have access to important slave titles. Although some titles were not hereditary, lineage did affiliation matter. The social connections "heredity" provided ensured individuals had access to different titles in the slave hierarchy. Even

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[65]Interview with Garba Dogari, no date.
[66]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

eunuchs recruited clients and adopted "sons." Royal slaves normally succeeded in transferring slave titles to their own kin by giving them slave offices under their own control. In one case *Shamaki* Ibrahim [Mai Gari], in power during the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi, was said to have had sixty children and fifty concubines in his house.[67] The *Rimawa* were most successful in this regard. As demonstrated previously, the title of *dan rimi* has generally been passed down among the progeny to two families: Barka and Allah Bar Sarki. Barka generated his own lineage or dynasty, and at least three of his sons, Malam, Yahaya and Nuhu held the title of *dan rimi* in the nineteenth century.[68] Likewise, although some titles were *supposed* to be held only by eunuchs, by the mid to late nineteenth century non-eunuch slaves, such as Jatau and MaiYaki, held the title of *sallama*. This further suggests an important development in slave officialdom in Kano.

While the title of *dan rimi* tended to be more hereditary than the titles of *shamaki* and *sallama*, their houses and families were often inter-related. As noted above, the more important slave title-holders (who were appointed directly by the emir) also had their own households. In addition to the households of the *dan rimi*, *shamaki* and *sallama*, the *sarkin hatsi*, *sarkin dogarai*, *kilishi*, *shettima* had their own compounds, households and families. While these lesser title-

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[67]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

[68]Two others, Dan Kaka and Hamza may also have been sons of Barka. See Chapter Two and interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1 April 1998. *Jakadan Shanono* Isyaku was also a son of Barka according to Alhaji Abba; see interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998.

holders were generally supervised by one of the senior three slaves, they were not directly subordinate to them; they were, however, often related to one of the three senior slave households by kinship and were generally chosen from their members.[69] Thus, royal slavery in the latter half of the nineteenth-century was characterized by the expansion of the number of slave households in the palace. These households "belonged" to one of three main slave families (the *Rimawa*, *Shamakawa* or *Sallamawa*). Membership in the three or four major royal slave families and households served an integrative function. Members often left to pursue positions under the *sarkin hatsi* or *sarkin dogarai*, for example, while still retaining links with their original houses or families. Slaves were clearly able, and often willing, to move between houses in order to gain experience and skills that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Recruitment and "in-house" training was the initial path to power and influence for many slaves. Later in their careers, slaves often left one household for another. They could even change their household allegiance should they come to hold one of the senior titles. Whereas younger untitled slaves remained members of their "original" family, an older slave appointed to a senior title in effect became the leader of a new household, as *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani noted in regard to his own career:

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[69]Of course, when a eunuch held the office of *sallama* he would have no biological kin, only clients and adopted sons.

> The one who is appointed by the emir is the important one. I was before in [another] house, but after my appointment as *sarkin hatsi* I moved to this house. I left my people there and met other people here and when I die another one will be appointed.[70]

Thus, members of one house could shift to another should they be promoted one of the important slave posts, as the current *Dan Rimi* emphasized: "I held the title of . . . *maja sirdi* . . . I was under *Shamaki* then. I can remember two people who were moved around from *shamaki's* house to *dan rimi's* house, let alone myself [they were] *Dan Rimi* Sambo and *Dan Rimi* Mamman."[71]

> Most of the title-holders did not inherit [their titles] from their families. The title can be taken from one family to another. For example, the present *sallama* is from the *Rimawa*, but he is now *sallama* so all the *Sallamawa* or families of *sallama* are under him.[72]

Royal slaves were related to distinct houses, but such attachments were not immutable; the social and political relationships among royal slaves were fluid. *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, a man in his thirties, who works in the household of the *sallama* and supervises the *'yan bindiga* [palace riflemen] noted that historically slave "houses" overlapped the boundaries of titled administrative positions. Although his description reflects some twentieth century realities, it nonetheless

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[70]Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996.
[71]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. *Dan Rimi* Mamman's father was *Ciroman Shamaki*. He originated in Bade (Yobe State), see interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.
[72]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 28 February 1996.

suggests that royal slave houses were intertwined, a process that intensified during the colonial period:

> The *lifidi* is from the house of the *sallama*, while the people are from the house of the *shamaki*. They will collect the equipment from *sallama*, just like the Sulke is from the house of the *sallama*, while the people are with *shamaki*. Like Kagira is from the house of *sallama* while the people are from *dan rimi*. Nobody has the right to give them costumes except with the permission of the *sallama*. If you look at the Zagage, you will find they are categorized into three groups, although they are performing the same duty there is classification: *babban zagi* is *Shamakawa*, *galadiman zagi* is Barime [*Rimawa*] while *sarkin takuba* is *Basallame* [*Sallamawa*]. Likewise the *dogarai*. Every *dogari* is under *sarkin Dogarai*, but among them there are youth from the house of *sallama*, like *barde*, administratively he is from *dogari* but he belongs to *sallamawa* in person because he is *sallama's barde*. So this is how the system is. Sometime you will think that a certain slave belongs to a certain house but on closer look you will find he does not belong there. Or you may have thought a certain post is for a certain house but on closer look you will find it does not belong there, or the people are not from that house.[73]

Although slaves could "become" members of another household, biological links to their fathers and families were still vitally important. The vast majority of royal slaves were raised and trained as members of the *Rimawa*, *Shamakawa* or *Sallamawa* despite the fact that they would sometimes work outside of these households. These links provided a means to unite the slave community across the hierarchical division of responsibilities and titles of which all slaves were a part. While there

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[73]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998. Even now, the current *sarkin hatsi* has ties to the *Rimawa*, as his grandfather was Allah Bar Sarki, the *dan rimi* between 1903/04-1908. Interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 18 July 1996. Likewise, Sani's uncle, Mohammadu, held the title of *dan rimi* under Emir Sanusi. That the progeny of Allah Bar Sarki came to control the title of *dan rimi* should be seen in the context of Barka's dominance of the title in the nineteenth century. In short, the dominance of certain families continued after the British conquest, although after Allah Bar Sarki's deposition neither Barka's progeny nor those of Allah Bar Sarki were given the title until the late 1950's, just before Nigeria became independent.

was certainly a competitive relationship between the slave houses, especially in the northern section of the palace, the royal slave community used kinship and household connections to mobilize support across these boundaries. The *Sallamawa* and *Shamakawa* linked their own houses to those of other slave houses to secure positions for their progeny. Although sons did not succeed their fathers as *shamaki* or *sallama*, they could be given subordinate titles in other houses. The existence of slave families likewise connected the three main houses together through shared parentage. For instance, *Sallama* Jatau (c. 1894-1903), leader of the *Sallamawa*, was the senior brother of *Dan Rimi* Allah Bar Sarki (c. 1904-1908).[74] Likewise, *Dan Rimi* Barka gave his daughter to *Shamaki* Ibrahim.[75] They gave birth to Isa, who did not hold the title of *shamaki* but was well remembered nonetheless, and possibly held the title of *maja sirdi* or *sarkin sidi*.[76] When Nuhu (*dan rimi* 1894-1903) lost his title, he almost immediately gave Allah Bar Sarki all his concubines. Furthermore, he directed all of his concubines and household to follow and obey Allah Bar Sarki. By so doing, Nuhu attempted to link his own family with that of Allah Bar Sarki in order to maintain some influence in the court.[77] This meant that a son of Allah Bar Sarki by one of Nuhu's former concubines would share the same mother as some of Nuhu's sons;

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[74]Unrecorded interview with Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru and Alhaji Aliyu, 20 March 1998.
[75]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.
[76]This is unlikely to be the Isa who was executed by Maje-Karofi, given the fact that if this was so he would have had to serve as *shamaki* before his father. See also unrecorded interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1 April 1998.
[77]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

they would be "brothers of the same mother." Thus a blood tie was created between the two houses. Access to slave networks of clients and patrons at the court was vital to maintaining power, wealth and influence.[78] The unification of Barka's descendants with the family of Allah Bar Sarki increased the power of the *Rimawa* family and minimized the effects of the emir's attempt to "divide and rule" the royal slave community. Like political appointments made among the free-born aristocracy, the office-holding system among the *bayin sarki* encouraged rivalry for the highest offices and the rewards that they brought. While there were some restrictions over who could assume slave titles based on previous appointments and customary practice, the existence of these competing houses, and factions within houses, provided the emir with political leverage that he used to control his royal slaves. Thus the households of *Sarkin Hatsi* and *Sarkin Dogarai* could be used to balance the power of the *Sallamawa*, *Rimawa* or *Shamakawa*. By bringing some individuals close to the throne, the emir could fragment the royal slave community, and encourage rivalry and competition between his royal slaves.[79] This intra-community rivalry helped prevent a possible slave rebellion. At the same time, royal slave "kinship" was used as a means to unite a portion of the slave

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[78]See interview with Alhaji Mohammad Hassan, 10 March 1998. See also, for example, *Northern Nigeria Annual Report* No. 594 (1907-1908) which reports that a "well to do man" requested permission to return to his former position as slave to the Emir "in order to regain his old status and friendships in the Emir's Household." The British officials also claimed that the large female population of the palace was the result of "the large female households of the Emir [and his] chief slaves . . . ." See also NAK SNP 9/5 3577/1921.

[79]Interview with Alhaji Garba Sarkin Gida, 14 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. Competition between slave title-holders and houses was reflected in the spatial and geographical layout of the palace. In general, see Nast, "Space, History and Power."

community in the palace in the face to attempts by the emir to do precisely the opposite.[80]

Throughout the nineteenth century, the *bayin sarki* attempted to keep their *gidaje* intact. During the Kano Civil War, the slaves divided into two factions. Generally, those who served under and supported Abdullahi followed the Yusufawa, while those who supported Mohammed Bello followed Tukur.[81] Barka's descendants among the *Rimawa* divided in two ["suka raba kafa biyu"] in order to ensure one of them would retain the title of *Dan Rimi*: "[Yahaya] called Nuhu and said to him 'you go follow Yusufawa at Takai. For me, I remain here with the Emir. If they come and win the war, then I know you will be there with them. If [Tukur] won the war, you know I am here."[82] With the exception of the major slave title-holders (*shamaki*, *dan rimi* and *sallama*) most of the *bayin sarki* favoured the sons of Abdullahi, as many had been mistreated by Mohammed Bello.[83] The royal slave community divided "in two" in order to ensure they would retain access to slave positions, regardless of the eventual outcome of the war. After the *Basasa*, both *Shamaki* Harisu and *Dan Rimi* Nuhu gained a great deal of personal power because it was known that they were the two who actually crowned Emir Aliyu.[84]

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[80]Of course, according to Maliki Law, as master the emir had the power to annul the marriages of any of his slaves. See *The Mukhtsar of Shaikh Khalil b. Ishak, According to the School of the Imam Malik b Anas*, sub-section 2. See also interview with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

[81]In general, see Adamu Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule.*

[82]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996. See also interviews with *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996 and *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995. *Shamaki* Inuwa stated that the slaves chose whichever candidate they preferred or favoured.

[83]See, for example: interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

[84]See East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, II, 66 and *Faid al Qadir Li-Awsaf Al-*

> Alieu, it appears, has, since he ascended the throne, gradually got rid of the holders of appointments and 'Serankuna' of Kano. These men were all free born and had obtained their offices by right of birth . . . He replaced them by his own personal slaves viz. the Salama . . . and also by putting in his young sons who of course had no authority.[85]

As the history of the *Basasa* demonstrates, kinship networks allowed some royal slave families to retain the control of important slave titles. Most especially, these ties allowed Barka's descendants to preserve their dominance of the title of *dan rimi.* Other senior slaves used their household and family connections to ensure their sons or clients would have access to a wide selection of titles in the hierarchy. Of course, the version of the Barka dynasty described above emphasizes continuity and cooperation; clearly, such cooperation did not always come easily. According to Wada Dako, the transition from *Dan Rimi* Yahaya to *Dan Rimi* Nuhu was complicated by the fact that Nuhu was Yahaya's junior brother. Although Yahaya was removed from the position of *dan rimi* in favour of Nuhu, he was "settled" in the house of *makaman dan rimi* after his deposition:

> They did nothing to him [Yahaya]. But he went out and settled in the house of *makaman dan rimi* and *Dan Rimi* Nuhu used to give Yahaya orders and he used to send him to some places even though he is his senior brother. Up to now there is a place we call Unguwar Makama. It is named after him because the

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Malik Al-Khatir. According to East, when Yahaya was asked [*shawarche*, to consult, give advice] by the *Waziri* of Sokoto whether he preferred Tukur or Yusufu, he chose Yusufu, whereas *Shamaki* Sa'idu said he simply preferred "jikokin Dabo" or whomever was among Ibrahim Dabo's grandchildren. See also "Malam Jafar's Chronicle of the Fulani Emir's of Kano," translated by J.O. Hunwick: "From there they went to Garko where Yusufu died, and the sultan's slaves put [Aliyu] in power."

[85]NAK SNP 17, 12 February 1903, Historical Documents on the Capture of Kano.

> *makaman dan rimi* used to stay under one tree together with his servants.[86]

Likewise, after Tukur's defeat, *Shamaki* Sa'idu and his family left or was forced to leave Kano. They were stripped of most of their property and possessions, and according to one account "hunger began to seize them and almost killed them."[87] For this reason, Sa'idu, along with *Sarkin Shanu* Datti and Rufa'i and *Ciroma* Mai Bindiga, left Kano for Damagaram.[88]

Concubinage and the Secrets of Royalty

Royal slaves gained access to aristocratic lineage networks via the institution of concubinage. By taking the daughters and sisters of royal slaves as concubines, the aristocracy bound itself to individual royal slaves in the most intimate of ways, through their households.[89] Oral data indicate that the institution of royal slavery actually helped to acculturate the Fulani emirs to Hausa systems of authority and government. This is not to say that the terms "Hausa" and "Fulani" were rigidly defined immutable categories; rather, the tradition reflects the process by which elite slaves gained access to the royal household. By linking themselves to the royal family through the institution of

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[86]Interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998.
[87]"Malam Jafar's Chronicle of the Fulani Emir's of Kano," translated by J.O. Hunwick.
[88]*Ibid.* With whom Aliyu fought a series of campaigns late in the nineteenth century.
[89]See, for example, the family tree of M. Muhammadu Dikko in the *Gwarzo District Notebook*. Dikko's father was brought from Borno as a boy after being enslaved during Rabeh's invasion. He grew up under the *Dan Rimi* and later married the niece of the 5th Emir Muhammad Bello.

concubinage, royal slaves were able to serve as the mentors of the free-born elite. This was a important avenue for the dissemination of slave influence and culture amongst the children of the powerful; indeed, the *shamaki* was responsible for disciplining the emir's own children.[90] The political tradition which arose out of this relationship bound the emir to certain individuals in the palace slave community. Each successive emir had certain slaves he relied upon more than any others.[91] These relationships were usually based on personal/family relationships between the emir and individual royal slaves. For instance, Abdullahi Maje Karofi was raised in the household of *Dan Rimi* Barka. Likewise, Usman Maje Ringim, Emir of Kano between 1846-1855 and one of Dabo's sons, was raised by *Shamaki* Nasamu.[92] The ties they created were informal, in the sense that they encouraged the development of non-institutional, personal ties between individuals, and permitted royal slaves access to the family and personal secrets of aristocratic households. Furthermore, the princes who were place in the houses of the senior slaves benefited in succession struggles from the information and relationships they had access to in the royal slave community.

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[90]Interview with *Sarkin Dogarai* Hassan, 22 November 1995 and Wada Dako, 27 January 1996. Even today, slave title-holders claim that should an emir not be the son of a concubine his leadership would have no power. See interviews with Wada Dako, 27 January 1996 and Alhaji Umaru, 11 January 1996.

[91]See Chapter Five.

[92]Interview with Alhaji Sadauki Panshekera, August 1977, conducted and cited by Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," 353. See also interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera*, Alhaji Abba Abubakar Sadauki, 29 March 1998, Wada Dako, 27 January 1996, Wada Dako 21 February 1998, *Dan Buram*, 3 September 1996 and *Dan Buram*, 25 March 1998.

According to Nast, over the course of the nineteenth century, royal slaves moved to more "informal" advisory positions which had previously been occupied by palace women. This transition was reflected in the spatial geography of the palace, which became more "patriarchal" and "martial" in character after the Fulani regime assumed power.[93] More military units were established and located in or near the palace. Likewise, more royal slaves participated in warfare, which became an important way of advancing in the slave hierarchy.

The seclusion of women was certainly an increasingly prominent feature of palace organization and geography.[94] Royal wives were more rigidly secluded than female slaves and concubines. However, drawing too stark a division between "outside" or "state" endeavours and "inside" or "private" endeavours obscures the importance of the royal household in politics. Certainly, men held political power, and after the *jihad* women were indeed excluded from holding political office.[95] But, political power was acquired and maintained by manipulating kinship connections, patron-client relationships, and ties to the emir which transcended a rigid dichotomy between public and private spaces. Power was acquired, maintained and controlled in the *cikin*

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[93]Nast, "Space, History and Power," 90.

[94]See Nast, "Space, History and Power" and Nast, "Engendering 'Space',". See also Beverly B. Mack, "Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Hausaland" in *Slavery and Abolition* 9 (1988), 89-110, Beverly B. Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano" in Catherine M. Coles and Beverly B. Mack (eds.), *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 109-129, Beverly B. Mack, "Service and Status: Slaves and Concubines in Kano, Nigeria" in Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen (eds.), *At Work in Homes* (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1990), 13-34.

[95]Interview with *Sarkin Kano* Alhaji Ado Bayero, 9 March 1983, conducted and cited by Mack, "Service and Status," 17. This point is also emphasized by Nast, "Space, History and Power," 94-100.

gida [Hausa: inside of the house/palace] as well as in the northern and southern slave domains described by Nast.[96] According to Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, Allah Bar Sarki, a slave of Emir Bello, was appointed *galadiman rumbu* on the advice of the *mai kudandan*, who controlled the palace foodstuffs inside the *cikin gida*.[97] Women had opportunity to advise the emir and to influence policy. They sometimes had links with the ruling families of other emirates, as royal wives were often married in order to consolidate political alliances between emirates and families.[98]

Barbara Cooper notes that although feminist scholarship has placed great emphasis on "how space is implicated in power relations as an important element in the production and reproduction of gender difference and sexual stratification," she prefers to take a nuanced approach to the problem of the "public-private" dichotomy, and focuses on the "ways in which both women and men transform and redefine the spaces available to them in order to gain access to previously excluded options."[99] This was indeed an important element in the social

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[96]Nast, "Engendering 'Space'," 63-64.

[97]Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 46.

[98]With regard to their influence beyond Kano Emirate, in Katsina one colonial officer commented that "the Magatakarda Haruna and Waziri probably have more influence with the Emir than anyone except the Magajiya [royal wife], his [Haruna's] wife, and Haruna's sister and his concubine Malka." See Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano," 128.

[99]Barbara M. Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900-1989* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997), xliii-xliv. For emphasis on the dichotomy between public and private, see Michelle Rosaldo, "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview" in Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974). For a critique, see Jane Collier and Sylvia J. Yanagisako, "Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship" in Jane F. Collier and Sylvia J. Yanagisako (eds.), *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). See also Deborah Rhode (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

relations of the palace. However, in the particular case of the Kano palace, women's spaces were "political" not only because they were able to transcend gendered boundaries, but, because the space they occupied was inherently political. The *cikin gida* was the centre of the emir's household and government. In short, access to certain physical spaces for many (both men and women) was limited; but those limitations did not necessarily exclude women from so-called private or public endeavours. Of course, certain spaces were highly charged and restricted gendered domains; nonetheless, "female" space was not *necessarily* related only to "private-domestic" activities. Women and men were linked by patterns of kinship and child-rearing. These links allowed women at the centre of the emir's household to play an important and regular part in palace politics. Male slaves likewise desired, indeed required, access to the "female" domain in order to ensure their voices were heard in the political decision making that occurred in the *cikin gida.*[100] Access was gained by cultivating relationships with women, often relatives, in the *cikin gida.* Of course, these were the most privileged of women, and their access to influence was a result of their social class.[101] Some were slaves, but, like male royal slaves, their positions granted them opportunities to acquire material and social rewards beyond the scope and ability of most women in Kano. This is not to argue that concubinage was a

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[100]See Beverly B. Mack, "Harem Domesticity in Kano, Nigeria" in Karen Tranberg Hansen (ed.), *African Encounters with Domesticity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 75-97.

[101]Although Cooper also documents a number of less privileged women entering or transforming the "political." See, for example: Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi,* 21-39

benevolent institution, but merely to emphasize that a rigid, binary opposition between political/public and domestic/private does not absolutely apply to household-style governments and administrations.[102] Profound inequality did occur within households, but as Bledsoe has argued with regard to Kpelle society, it was sometimes a result of age, not gender, differences. Older women were frequently able to control and dominate their juniors by virtue of their greater access to material and cultural resources.[103]

Females in the palace acquired titles and controlled the interior spaces of the *gidan sarki.* These titles included: *mai babban daki* [Hausa: the mother of the big room], who was the mother of the emir and often a concubine;[104] the *uwar soro* [Hausa: mother of the Household] who in conjunction with the *sallama* was responsible for concubines, the emir's daughters and the general supervision of the *cikin gida*; *mai soron baki* [Hausa: overseer of the palace guests] who supervised palace living quarters and relayed messages from some of the senior royal slaves to the emir; *'uwar waje* [Hausa: overseer of the area outside of the main living quarters], a title generally held by ten to

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[102]For a comparative example, see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire.* See also Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi,* xliv and Niara Sudarkasa, "The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies" in *Feminist Studies* 12, 1 (1986), 91-103, as cited by Cooper, xliv. Sudarksa argues for two "domains," male and female, both hierarchically ordered and both with "private" and "public" activities.

[103]See Caroline Bledsoe, *Women and Marriage in Kpelle Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) and Caroline Bledsoe and Gilles Pison (eds.), *Nuptiality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Contemporary Anthropological and Demographic Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). See also Igor Kopytoff, "Women's Roles and Existential Identities" in Peggy Sanday and Ruth Goodenough (eds.), *Beyond the Second Sex: New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 75-98.

[104]Shekara, the concubine of Ibrahim Dabo originally from Daura, was the mother of three emirs: Usman, Abdullahi and Mohammad Bello.

fifteen slave women who supervised the people living in her area of responsibility. Other positions included the *'uwar gida*, *'uwar kuyangi*, the senior slave women responsible for the living conditions of all women of slave status living inside the palace, *'uwar tuwo* or chief cook, who supervised the cooking done in the central kitchens which fed many of the palace residents. Senior titled slave women occupied profoundly political spaces, and they had connections to the royal slave community via kinship. Indeed, the *jakadu*, or female slave messengers, relayed messages between the emir, his officials and women secluded in the *cikin gida*. They were often the widows of palace slave officials, or the relations of important royal slaves.[105]

> A *jakadiya* is different from a concubine. You don't put her in a hut and keep her inside the compound as you do a concubine, and a *jakadiya* doesn't take her turn with the cooking, either. The *jakadiya* comes to fetch her master if he is in the women's quarters and someone comes to see him; his men cannot come inside the compound where the women live, so she brings him the message.[106]

Thus, women in the *cikin gida* had kinship ties with both the emir and with the male palace slave community; their world was political, and their influence in the household was a significant factor in politics.[107] They were an integral part of the royal household and the

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[105]See Mack, "Service and Status: Slaves and Concubines in Kano, Nigeria" and Heidi J. Nast, "The Impact of British Imperialism on the Landscape of Female Slavery in the Kano Palace, Northern Nigeria" in *Africa* 64, 1 (1994). This pattern was common elsewhere in Hausaland. In 1931 a colonial officer noted that Haruna, the former Magatakarda of Katsina "contined to keep abreast of Native Authority affairs and to influence the Emir from time to time through his wife, who was Dikko's [the Emir] eldest sister." Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano," 128.

[106]Mary Smith (ed.), *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 235.

[107]Interview with *Dan Masanin Kano* Maitama Sule, 28 January 1996 and *Wakilin*

palace community. Thus, as others have pointed out in the case of the Middle East, so-called domestic affairs have a vital impact on the "public" world. For instance, women often served as "information brokers" in the arrangement of marriages. They mediated between families and households, and ultimately determined the success, failure, or even the possibility, of important *political* alliances.[108] In other words, the political and domestic are interrelated and overlapping, and are not necessarily seperate "gendered" domains.

> It is a royal wife's background that enables her to anticipate the emir's judgments and underlines another basis for her importance to the emir (and thus her authority in the palace community). Each royal wife constitutes a political alliance for the emir, a formal bond with another emirate or sultanate. Whether she is the daughter of a concubine, a royal retainer, or another emir, the woman who becomes a royal wife has been raised in a royal community. She is therefore schooled in appropriate protocol, royal obligations, and has an instinctive sense of the parameters of her own power. Furthermore, while her background does not guarantee familiarity with strategic issues, it is often the case that the women chosen as the royal wife is politically informed. Her influence with her husband is significant, albeit nearly undocumented in history.[109]

According to an interview with the late *Makaman Dan Rimi* Sango, recorded in 1982 and an interview with Malam Da'u Aliyu, conducted in 1989, Nuhu was deposed because he was very rude to Abbas, probably a result of

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Panshekera Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998. For a comparative example, see Carl Petry, "A Paradox of Patronage During the Early Mamluk Period" in *Muslim World* vol. LXXIII nos. 3-4 (July-October 1983), 196-198.

[108]Cynthia Nelson, "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World" in Caroline B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent (eds.), *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 111-123, see especially 118-120. See also Louise Lamphere, "The Domestic Sphere of Women and the Public World of Men: The Strengths and Limitations of an Anthropological Dichotomy" in Brettell and Sargent, *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 82-92.

[109]Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano," 126.

> Nuhu having the intention to marry a lady Dadadaye from the Rimawa clan. However, Nuhu was overpowered by the then *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Maje Karofi who made Dadadaye his Sadaka [concubine], and who gave birth to Abbas . . . She had since the 1870's been closely associated with Allah Bar Sarki in Gidan Rumfa. This well established relation connected Abbas and Allah Bar Sarki long ago.[110]

Another possible basis of this relationship is likely to be found in Allah Bar Sarki's connection to Abbas through his mother, a concubine named Jajakuna. According to Wada Dako, *Sallama* Jatau was the younger brother of a female concubine named Jajakuna, who was the mother of Abbas.[111] They were both captured at the same time and brought to Kano. Abdullahi Maje Karofi took Jajakuna as a concubine. She died sometime after giving birth to Abbas. Abbas was then raised in the household of his sibling's mother, Maikano Dan Yura. If Jatau was indeed the senior brother of Allah Bar Sarki, then Allah Bar Sarki could have had ties with Abbas via the institution of concubinage, as he may have been the biological or adopted brother of Jajakuna. Jajakuna, who was known to be very fair skinned and beautiful, may have been the woman who came between Nuhu and Maje Karofi, which may explain why Nuhu was demoted upon Abbas' succession.[112]

These relationships were reinforced by the patterns of child-rearing in the palace. Royal children were raised by a foster mother or *uwar goyo*, often a slave concubine, with whom the child frequently

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[110]Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 66. Based on interviews with Malam Da'u Aliyu, 31 December 1989 and *Makaman Dan Rimi* Sango, 1982.

[111]Interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998.

[112]Jatau, which means "red" or "fair" skinned also suggests a link with Jajakuna. See interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998.

developed a very close relationship.[113] Concubines and royal wives cared for infants once they were past weaning age, a bond that remained important even after adolescence, when boys would leave the *cikin gida.*[114]

> [it is an] unwritten law for Emirs to be chosen from the sons of concubines rather than sons of wives. In the palace, the royal children, including the children of Fulani wives, were usually bathed and attended by Hausa servants or concubines. The concubine would inform the child as to which bori spirit was its spiritual guardian and teach the child to leave Friday offerings of yogurt in the room reserved for the bori deity Uwarmu (Our Mother).[115]

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[113]Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i, *Gidan Rumfa: The Kano Palace* (Kano: Triumph, 1995), 144.

[114]Interview with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996, Mack, "Royal Wives in Kano," 122-123. These patterns continued after the British conquest of Kano in 1903, and concubines from royal slave houses raised two of the longest reigning emirs of the twentieth century: Abdullahi Bayero and his son, Ado Bayero. According to oral data collected by Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i, *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Bayero, the son of *Sarkin Kano* Abbas, was raised by Taloko, a concubine of his father, while *Sarkin Kano* Ado Bayero, the son of Abdullahi Bayero, was brought up by 'Yar Ja, a concubine of his father who was the *uwar waje* of *Unguwar Bare-Bari.* See Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i, *Gidan Rumfa: The Kano Palace* (Kano: Triumph, 1995), 144, based on an interview with Fulanin Dandago, 26 February 1986. The importance of royal slaves in the household or *gida* of the emir was likewise acknowledged by British colonial officials, who observed that the emir's household was the governing factor in politics. The resistance of Emir Abbas and his court to the British attempts to replace slave tax collectors with free officials led H.R. Palmer to state: "Adamu says that the Emir freely states that his "slaves" are now going to collect all taxes. When you told Serikin Kano about having the districts in his own family, I wonder if that interpreter used the word gidda? If so he has a ready excuse, but it is merely an excuse, because he knows perfectly well that our whole policy is against Jekadas and slave-rule." H.R. Palmer to Major Arthur Festing, 5 September 1907 enclosed in NAK SNP 6/3 136/1907. See also Palmer to Festing, 2 September 1907, enclosed in NAK SNP 6/3 136/1907: "Whatever the personal feelings of Serikin Abbas may be, the actions of Serikin Kano in council (by that I meant the Giddan Seriki) are in direct opposition to both our policy and prestige." See also NAK SNP 6/3 136/1907: "Giddan Seriki: King's entourage not family-palace clique slaves nominated as district headmen Ma'aji, Shamaki, Dan Rimi etc all asserted to number with Jakadas etc and families 10,000 people."

[115]Priscilla Ellen Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili Legends in Kano," 51, citing John Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto* (Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing, 1986), 56.

Many royal princes were raised in the houses of royal slaves after they left the *cikin gida*. Those slaves sent to the house of one of his father's favourite slaves were often marked as particularly capable. They were trained in the arts of war, intrigue and palace etiquette by royal slaves. Their presence in the royal slave houses also provided the opportunity for the princes to cultivate relationships with younger slaves, to whom they turned for support when they began political careers.

Such ties were especially important because the *shamaki, dan rimi* and *sallama* advised members of the *Tara Ta Kano* on the qualities and abilities of the prospective candidates for the throne following the death of an emir. Their analysis was based on their knowledge of the candidate from his childhood. They briefed the councillors about each candidate's character and supplied information about the candidate's mother:

> They sought the advice of the royal slaves. If we select such a person is he of good character? [The councillors would say] "It is you have known him since childhood. More so if we select such a person, what is the character of his mother? Is she a good person?" She has to be made known [e.g her character] to them [the councillors], and how she controls her affairs with other groups of people in the palace.[116]

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[116]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998. See also interview with *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998 and *Fayd al-Qadir Li-Awsaf Al-Malik Al-Khatir*. According to the author, *Waziri* Muhammad al-Bukhari recommended to the Commander of the Faithful that *Wombai Shehu* be appointed Emir after the death of Mohammad Bello because he was popular with the slaves. Generally, the senior slaves had to agree with the choice of emir, although they had no formal role in choosing the successor. They often chose an emir who they thought would provide them with an opportunity to wield power and influence, and were unconcerned with how learned or pious he was. In this regard, see interview with *Madaki*, 4 February 1996.

Likewise, according to *Shamaki* Inuwa, in the past slaves had an "informal" role in choosing the next emir, and their needs and wants were taken into consideration.[117]

> I was the only one before Madakin Kano, Sarkin Bai, Sarkin Dawaki [they] are the Kingmakers, and I will be around and serve as the representative of all the Emir's slaves, they will receive information from me [and] everything will be done in my presence, so this is a big job and that was before the arrival of the British.[118]

The royal slave community defined these relationships as family or kinship ties between slave and free houses: "Uncle means brother-in-law to the emir, that is because they used to marry our sisters or our daughters, so whenever they gave birth the son is either our son or our nephew."[119] This relationship could certainly result in a dramatic inversion of the social dichotomy between free and slave:

> A certain prince named Shehu prostrates himself before the powerful title-holding slave Shamaki. He does this *not* because Shamaki is powerful, but because Shehu's mother (a concubine) is Shamaki's sister. According to familial status rules of age (for Shehu and Shamaki now belong to the same extended family through kinship and not purely slavery), Shamaki is of higher status than the prince.[120]

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[117]Interview with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995.

[118]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 15 December 1995.

[119]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 June 1996. According to Sa'idu, the emirs of Kano commonly took concubines from *Gandun Nassarawa*, and according to one informant: "When we said a female slave had been 'locked (up)' by an Emir or District Head we meant that he made her his concubine with whom he could sleep only in the day time." See Sa'idu AbdulRazak Giginyu , "History of a Slave Village in Kano Gandun Nassarawa" (B.A., unpublished, Bayero University Kano, 1981), 131-132.

[120]Interview with Tijani Garba, June, 1990, conducted and cited by Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power", 20. Once the prince assumed a title their roles would reverse: "A Shamaki will lay [bow] down before his grandchild if he is an Emir because a *Shamaki* is still [only] a *Shamaki*." Interview with *Madaki*, 4 February 1996. See also interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996: "No, now you can go see them in the palace. In reality they were *sarakuna* in the past. Now if I go to the

The royal household in particular was intimately bound to royal slave households via these procreative relationships. Individual royal slaves were often related to the mothers of many emirs, as nearly every nineteenth and twentieth century emir was the son of a concubine.[121] Shekera, Ibrahim Dabo's concubine, bore Emir Usman, Emir Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Emir Emir Mohammad Bello. In general, their membership in the household of the emir gave them access to royal and family secrets, which were transmitted from the *cikin gida* by the emir's female servants, many of whom had ties of kinship or marriage with powerful male royal slaves. Thus, some royal slaves could claim familial ties with the emir via the progeny of the emir and these concubines: "And the emir has no right to send them away because his mother is their sister."[122] This often guaranteed a good relationship between slave and emir.[123] These relationships remained important after 1903, as slaves who had been members of the pre-colonial *mamluk* establishment rose to positions of power. Although their positions and the system changed after 1903, the ties between emir, concubines

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palace, I know where *shamaki* is. I will then go to him. However, if it were the *sallama* [for example] of those days, I would go to him humbly and greet him with the utmost of respect [laughter]."

[121]On concubinage, see Paul E. Lovejoy, "Concubinage and the Status of Women in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria" in *Journal of African History*, 29, 2 (1988), 245-66, Paul E. Lovejoy, "Concubinage in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Slavery and Abolition*, 11, 2 (1990), 159-189, Beverly Mack, "Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Hausaland" in Elizabeth Savage (ed.), *The Human Commodity: Perspectives on the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 89-110 and Heidi J. Nast, "The Impact of British Imperialism on the Landscape of Female Slavery in the Kano Palace, Northern Nigeria" in *Africa* 64, 1 (1994).

[122]Interview with Wada Dako, 21 February 1998.

[123]This dynamic continued to play itself out during the colonial period, Wada Dako noted: "*Sallama* Na'Abba had a good relationship with the Emir Sanusi, because the mother of Sanusi was his daughter." Interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998.

and royal slaves remained vital. *Dan Rimi* Mamman had a sister who was a concubine to Emir Usman, and it is said that the Emir approved of whatever Mamman did. This relationship made *Dan Rimi* Mamman much more powerful than *Shamaki* Salihu; so powerful, in fact, that he was sent into exile by the British in 1925: "whatever he did the Emir approved, and at that time the *Dan Rimi* was more powerful than *Shamaki*, so when the white man came they sent him away."[124] Although in exile, when Abdullahi Bayero came to power in 1926, he continued to send him money and goods.[125]

The political language and discourse of the current royal slave community still reflects the importance of social linkages provided by concubinage.[126] In royal households, the sons of concubines and the sons of wives all competed for the throne and the favour of their father, the emir. The current emir, Alhaji Ado Bayero, stated:

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[124]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha and Malam Aminu, 1 April 1998. In general, see interview with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996.See also Chapter Five and Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power." See also NAK KANOPROF 25/1926; NAK SNP 17/2 16687 Vol. I; NAK SNP 17/2 14686 Vol. I; NAK SNP 9/12 635/1925; NAK SNP 17/2 18956 Vol. II and NAK SNP 17/3 21326 Vol. II.

[125]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[126]The *Lifidi* Ahmed Aliyu Daneji stated that *Sarkin Kano* Ado Bayero (the current emir) used to play in the house of his family because of the relationship between his own grandfather and Ado Bayero's father, *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Bayero. The *lifidi*'s grandfather gave Abdullahi Bayero one of his daughters as a concubine. The unspoken assumption is that Ado Bayero was the son of that concubine. *Lifidi*'s elder sister (same father, same mother), was later given to Ado Bayero as a concubine. Likewise, the tie between slaves and the emir was emphasized by the *sarkin ruwa*, who reported that his own mother (Karimatu) raised *Sarkin Kano* Inuwa. Once again, the inference is that the mother of *sarkin ruwa* was somehow related to the royal house.Interviews with *Lifidi* Ahmed Aliyu Daneji, 24 November 1995 and *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996. See also interviews with *Mabudi* Alhaji Sale, 1 November 1995 and 9 February 1996. According to one informant, *Shamaki* Salihi (Shamaki c. 1919-1926) was the father of Ado Bayero's mother. Interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998. Although drawn from the colonial period, these examples demonstrate the persistence of the ties between the royal slave community and the emir even after 1903.

> When I was growing up I remember my father [the Emir] would give equally to each of us, his children, regardless of whether our mothers were concubines or wives - in fact if a concubine's son was even one day older that I, he'd receive first, and if that was the last thing, too bad.[127]

Of course, other persons emphasized that the emirs of Kano made a particular distinction between their slaves and their sons:

> The thing is that *cucanawa* became so many during the reign of the Emir of Kano Abdullahi Maje Karofi. So that in that time Maje Karofi had so many children, his blood children numbers 107 . . . And there were also *cucanawa* children of slaves. So when he wanted to give certain things to his children each one will come and collect, that his the children of the [*cucanawa*] and the other children [his own] will come to him all together and each be given his/her share [so] they Emir gave an instruction that in order for the children in his house to be differentiated, the children of slaves should all have the three tribal marks on their cheeks . . . so that he could know his real children.[128]

In one sense these ties provided royal slaves with free "kin", but, in another sense it allowed them to operate outside the social norms dictated by these kinship networks. The ties between royalty and royal slaves were not "formal" or "acknowledged" in the same manner as were marriage and family ties within free-born families and lineages. Royal slaves could not make the same political and social claims on these relationships as could "real" members of the family and lineage. While royal slaves may have called themselves "nephews" and "uncles" they had no formal rights associated with these terms, such as

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[127]Interview with *Sarkin Kano* Alhaji Ado Bayero, 9 March 1983, conducted and cited by Beverly Mack, "Service and Status: Slaves and Concubines in Kano, Nigeria", 11. Likewise, one British official noted that in Messau Emirate seven *hakimai* were royal slaves: "the one who holds the highest rank amongst these is Shameki [sic] . . . the reason these slaves hold such prominent positions is that they are the natural sons of the Emir." NAK SNP 7/13 4896/1912. See also NAK SNP 10/5 181p/1917.

[128]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

inheritance, access to certain hereditary titles, or access to familial political and patronage networks. Nevertheless, they did provide an informal channel through which politics and relationships in the royal household could be influenced. As "outsiders", royal slaves, could do as they wished, protected from harm and censure by their ties to the royal household and the secrets to which they had access.[129] In one very important sense, royal slaves could operate outside of the formal distinctions of status, respect and obligation. For this reason, they became close to the elite because free members of the aristocracy could share "joking" relationships with certain royal slaves. These relationships were characterized by a relaxed familiarity. The current *Dan Iya*, and one of the sons of the current emir, noted:

> . . . these slaves of the emir can do whatever they want to do to you. They do not fear telling you anything. Because they do not fear you. Whatever they want (to tell you) they will tell you. Because of this, you too can tell them whatever you want to tell them.[130]

Oral tradition relates that should royal slaves be displeased with the emir, they often approached his mother (who could be their daughter or sister) for redress. Likewise, the emir often turned to his mother for advice and guidance.[131] After the conquest of Kano by the

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[129]Ultimately, the emir was responsible for the actions of his royal slaves. See Allan Christelow, "Slavery in Kano, 1913-1914: Evidence from the Judicial Records" in *African Economic History* no. 14 (1985): "The Emir's own slaves were held liable for their acts as ordinary freeborn people would be, with the Emir assuming the responsibility for punishing them, but not making restitution for their crime." See also Allan Christelow (ed.), *Thus Ruled Emir Abbas: Selected Cases from the Records of the Emir of Kano's Judicial Council* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 178.

[130]Interview with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996.

[131]Interview with *Dan Masanin Kano* Maitama Sule, 28 January 1996.

British, a slave named Ajuji was appointed as the *shamaki*, despite the fact that another slave, Harisu, still held the title. Harisu had never been formally deposed because he left Kano to go to Sokoto with Emir Aliyu immediately before the British conquest. When Harisu returned to Kano in 1903, he was placed in the house of the *Sallama* until Ajuji died. According to palace tradition, Emir Abbas had to go out and meet Harisu when he returned, and was unable to keep him away from his rightful place in officialdom.[132] After Ajuji's death, the mother of Harisu pressured Emir Abbas to make Harisu *shamaki*, which he eventually did.[133] One informant further stressed the tie between Ajuji and Harisu by claiming they were brothers.[134]

> It is all the same thing, that is why no one can do without the other. If you try to react [*matsa*: press, squeeze, pester, annoy, badger] it could be your cousins, brother or son and if he tried it could be his uncle, father or in-law.[135]

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the evolution of royal slave political and social culture throughout the nineteenth century. The palace slave community used a variety of means to resist economic, social and political demands made by both the emir and the aristocracy. This was accomplished by creating royal slave networks of kinship inside

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[132]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996 and *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.
[133]Interviews with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.
[134]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.
[135]Interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998.

the *gidan sarki.* These families were meaningful and vital social units, which reflected the general importance of kinship in Kano officialdom. Although all slaves were by definition "kinless", in the sense that they were outsiders, without formal lineage ties linking them to broader corporate and cultural networks, the *bayin sarki* manipulated the social contradictions implicit in the institution of royal slavery to establish a community from which they could draw corporate support. Slaves used this corporate support to secure access to slave titles. This practice ensured that certain individuals in the slave community would maintain their power and influence.

Government in Kano was an extension of the relationships and structure of the emir's own household. Officialdom did not take the form of a highly regularized and institutionalized bureaucratic state. Political life was located, conducted and contested amidst the "webs" of personal and kin relationships in the households of the leading slave and free officials.[136] The household of the ruler lay at the centre of this system: the emir dispensed patronage and appointments to all of Kano officialdom. Promotion and responsibilities varied in relation to individuals and their own relationship with the "state," represented in the singular by the emir. After concerns about lineage and descent, ties of loyalty to an individual emir was the central method people qualified to hold office and receive promotions. The ruler in effect attached Kano officialdom to his own household. Thus, the division between "public-political" and "private-reproductive" space was less

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[136]See Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 24-25.

formal and rigid than some have argued.[137] Certainly, "male" and "female" realms were defended and demarcated in the palace, but, in a very real sense power emanated from the central royal household outwards.[138] Private space was political terrain. The reliance on royal slaves was an indication that the emirs of Kano attempted to govern Kano from within their own households (to which royal slaves were attached.) Likewise, the heads of official households granted lesser titles and patronage to members of their own households, a smaller microcosm of the royal household. In short, a title-holder's relationship with the royal household was often *the* pivotal element in a successful (or unsuccessful) official career. While the emir was central to this process, so were his wives, concubines, sons, grandsons, uncles and brothers.

The royal slave palace community was itself organized into households which had patrimonial and personal ties with the emir. Royal slave administration of Kano Emirate was erected, maintained and elaborated by these ties. Of course, free officials had other interests, such as the accumulation of wealth, possible accession to the emirship, desire for official advancement, and lineage or descent concerns. Nonetheless, in nineteenth century Kano, the locus of political activity lay in the varied relationships between officials and

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[137]Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power" and Heidi J. Nast, "Engendering 'Space': State Formation and the Restructuring of Northern Nigeria's Kano Palace, 1807-1903" in *Historical Geography* Vol. 23, Nos. 1 and 2 (1993), 62-75.

[138]See Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire.*

emirs.[139] Royal slaves exercised power as the emir's representatives. In so doing, they acquired power of their own.

Royal slaves tied themselves to the emirship by manipulating the reproductive ties of their own households with those of the elite. Concubinage provided royal slaves with a series of informal social relationships which they could and did use to influence policy and decision-making. Households also served as the social space in which knowledge was acquired and distributed. In turn, Emir Abdullahi Maje Karofi amd Muhammad Bello tried to limit the elaboration of royal slave kinship networks, and generally relied on public displays of power to diminish the influence of their royal slaves. Certainly, the ability of royal slaves to act independently was circumscribed by legal and social disabilities; indeed, it was for this reason that they were so useful to a long succession of nineteenth century emirs. Yet, royal slaves actively contested the terms of their subjugation. Royal slaves were most certainly slaves (albeit privileged ones), but their status as *slaves* did not necessarily negate their ability to construct ideologies of power, kinship and community that reflected their own aims, as well as the nature of their interaction and relationship with the dominant culture of the elite. Furthermore, the development of royal slave households helped to institutionalize royal slavery in Kano. As royal slave houses developed, ties to titles, power and the palace system were claimed by an entire community, not simply isolated, individual slaves. The evolution of households also stimulated the growth of formal networks

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[139]For a comparative example, see Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*, 36.

of training, knowledge and learning which became the preserve of royal slave title-holders and their households, to be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Learning, Knowledge and Political Power in the Royal Slave Community

marriage strategies are inseparable from inheritance strategies, fertility strategies, and even educational strategies, in other words from the whole set of strategies for biological, cultural and social reproduction that every group implements in order to transmit inherited powers and privileges, maintained or enhanced, to the next generation.[1]

Introduction

Previously, we have focused on two major characteristics of royal slavery in Kano: the manner in which personal or kinship relationships with an emir could aid royal slave advancement and on the way in which royal slave households were the focal point of kinship relationships among slaves themselves. The acquisition of skills and knowledge was also a vital element of royal slave culture. While kinship networks helped to unite a sometimes divided royal slave community, the acquisition of "knowledge" allowed slaves to access to the privileges associated with certain skills and slave titles. As a system of household recruitment, training and advancement emerged, "slave knowledge" was passed down to a younger generation of royal slaves. This chapter explores the composition and meaning of "slave knowledge" and the methods used by royal slaves to learn new skills. Although, as indicated in Chapter Three, the basic framework of the system was founded on the development of royal slave households, in

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[1]Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 60-61.

practice royal slaves had to ensure their kin and clients possessed the skills necessary to secure their advancement through the slave hierarchy. For senior slaves, the distribution of knowledge provided them with access to well-trained subordinates who in turn strengthened their households and positions by ensuring their orders would be effectively executed. For subordinate slaves, the acquisition of knowledge permitted access to the more senior slave ranks.

Slaves were recruited to perform specific tasks, many of which required considerable skill and ability to master. Slaves were trained for state service in the palace, especially in the households of royal slaves, which served as formal centres of schooling and training. Certainly, free officials held titles and possessed skills and political acumen, but only royal slaves were systematically trained and recruited in a manner which also ensured that the emir would have access to a wide variety of skills. The free aristocracy either had no access to, or interest in, acquiring many of these skills. The acquisition and mobilisation of royal slaves effectively became the acquisition and mobilisation of "knowledge." Most importantly, the emir had preferential access to, and a large degree of control over, this knowledge. The training slaves undertook, the forms of knowledge they acquired, and the control of knowledge by slaves, demonstrate that a formal and institutionalized system of royal slave education and "household apprenticeship" had evolved over the course of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, Jane Guyer and Samuel M. Eno Belinga have recently argued that African conceptualizations of knowledge (as a social and intellectual category) were central to the way that labour was organized and to the nature of political life in general.[2] The accumulation of large numbers of followers was a pivotal component of political power in Africa. However, the process did not result in the "homogenization" of bodies of dependents and followers. Rather, knowledge and invention encouraged the development of "personal singularity and social multiplicity as social and cultural values."[3] The political elite did not simply accumulate groups of followers, but focused on the most effective "composition" of dependents, based upon skills and abilities that would in turn strengthen the political, economic and social position of the proto-typical "big man." As Guyer and Belinga note, the attempt to acquire "wealth in people" must also be seen as an attempt to acquire and control "wealth in knowledge." The ability to mobilize the labour of individuals was of course central to this goal, but so was an individual's capacity for "invention." The following pages explore the acquisition and transmission of knowledge in this context. I focus on the social uses of knowledge, and on the manner in which knowledge was deployed as an instrument of domination and subordination among the free and slave title-holding communities.

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[2]Jane I. Guyer and Samuel M. Eno Belinga, "Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge: Accumulation and Composition in Equatorial Africa", *Journal of African History* 36 (1995), 91-120.

[3]*Ibid.*, 104-106. See also C. Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and Domestic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery.*

Forms of Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century

The nomenclature of many of the slave titles was associated with certain domains or categories of knowledge. For example, the title *shamaki*, which means stables, indicates that his primary responsibility was the supervision of the emir's horses; the title *kilishi*, which also means carpet, indicates that he was primarily responsible for laying out the emir's carpet and maintaining the emir's throne room; the title *sarkin hatsi*, or "chief of grains," indicates that he was responsible for the collection and distribution of grains in the *gidan sarki*; the title *sarkin dogarai* identified the holder as the commander of the royal slave bodyguards, while the possession of the title of *mai shanu* indicated the holder was especially skilled at the management and care of cattle. Thus, skills and abilities (as specific forms of knowledge) were reflected in the very titles individual royal slaves held. The names of new titles were often chosen to reflect the duties and responsibilities - the knowledge - each title-holder was expected to perform.[4]

> The function of *maja sirdi* is to tie the saddle on the emir's horses . . . the horses are under the care of the *shamaki*. All the saddles and other things for riding horses owned by the emir are in the house of the *shamaki*. There is a special place for them. There is the stable. Every horse has his own *linzami* [bit] hanged. And every horse has a saddle. Embroideries are all there. The swords, spears etc. are all kept in the house of *shamaki*.[5]

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[4]Of course, duties and responsibilities changed, as individual occupants of offices changed.

[5]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

Royal slaves controlled and managed the taxation system, and therefore possessed information about the districts under their control. This included knowledge about the character of the village heads and the amount of annual tax they provided. The organization of villages and the local geography of districts were important elements of slave knowledge. Young or inexperienced slaves accompanied their patrons to supervise plantations, where they learned about the management of people, and basic details about crop management and the size of the harvest expected from each *gandu*.[6]

The *shamaki* and his subordinates tended the palace horses, and therefore developed skills related to animal husbandry and the maintenance and care of saddles and bridles, for example.[7] They also knew how to keep the emir's horses healthy and secure. Like the other senior slaves, the *shamaki* had titled slave subordinates under him. The description of the titles below is drawn from oral data collected by Yunusa in 1975, and should be regarded as an example of the duties that royal slaves *could* perform in the nineteenth century; however, duties and responsibilities could and did change, the system was a dynamic, not static. Nevertheless, the description of the titles attests to the existence of specific fields of knowledge that royal slaves could and did acquire. For instance, the *madakin shamaki*, was responsible for the purchase of the Emir's horses, and was the tax-collector for the towns of Kahu and Hausawa; the *ciroman shamaki*,

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[6]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[7]The *Maja Sidi* was directly responsible for training and maintaining the health of the Emir's horses, Alkali Hussaini Sufi, *Mu san Kammu*, 98-99 and interview with *Maja Sirdi* Ibrahim, 20 August 1996.

presented complaints to the Emir and was also the *jakada* for the towns of Kiyawa, Jangefe, Hunungumai, Malikawa ta Sarari, and Malikawa ta Garu; the *makaman shamaki* and *ciroman shamaki* attended the Emir's court and therefore were trained political operatives; the *sarkin zage* was in charge of spare horses when the emir rode into battle; the *lifidi* was the official directly responsible for the distribution of quilted horse armour and chain mail; the *sarkin ruwa* was in charge of water provisions when the emir made a long journey, and would therefore have possessed geographical and logistical knowledge about the Emirate and beyond; the *babban zagi*, who rode directly in front of the emir as his chief escort, served as his aide, and carried his cloak;[8] the *uban dawaki* served as the chief of military intelligence, and was in charge of military scouting parties; the *sarkin takubba* looked after the royal swords and daggers.[9]

Likewise, the *dan rimi* supervised the maintenance and repair of the palace and city walls, and therefore had knowledge about construction and building.[10] He sent out slave subordinates to inspect the walls, and they reported any damage or disrepair to him, which was then mended by slaves under his supervision. The *dan rimi* was also responsible for distributing gifts on behalf of the emir to slave officials,

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[8]Clapperton saw a slave who was presumably the *babban zagi*, see Denham Clapperton and Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*, II, 319-320.

[9]See Yusufu Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano," 43-45. See also interviews with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, Muhammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 28 September 1975 and 30 December 1975, *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975 and Gwadabe Maidawaki Dogari, 11 July 1975, all from the *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[10]Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 69 and Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 26. See also interview with Gwadabe Maidawaki Dogari, 11 July 75, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

regular non-titled palace slaves, and to visitors. Finally, the court drummers were attached to his office, and he was therefore (indirectly) responsible for their care and maintenance.[11]

The position of *dan rimi* was also associated with knowledge of Kano history. Ibrahim Barka, Malam Barka, Yahaya and Nuhu were literate scholars in their own right.[12] Nuhu, for instance, played a central role in the composition of Temple's "Notes on the History of Kano."[13] Alhaji Kabiru recounted the history of one *dan rimi* who was alive before the *jihad*. He was associated with the *wangarawa*[14] and the dissemination of knowledge in the palace, city and countryside, as well as with knowledge about the history of Kano, expressed in his access to, and the control of, "books":

> During the time of the *Wanagarawa* there was a crisis, where a person called dan rimi went to seize books from Malam, the chief Imam of Madabo[15], who was forecasting events, doom, blessings and famines when his pupil came to town [Kano] and started to spread the story. The Emir sent this man, he was believed to be very large [strong] named dan rimi, to seize the books and bring him along. When the Malam heard about it [the plan] he put everything in this well. When this dan rimi came he killed the Malam and later he saw the books in the well. Since then, people kept on trooping there to drink the water for healing . . . Until the time of Bayero who ordered it closed. At that time tap water and hospitals were introduced. Dan rimi was the person who consulted with the Malams about what will happen and sought the solutions. He was responsible for all the knowledge and for some studies, such as knowing what will happen in the year and

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[11]Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 69 and Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "C.L. Temple's Notes on the History of Kano," 26. See also interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[12]See for example interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.

[13]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 43.

[14]Muslim scholars and teachers who came to Kano from Mali in the fifteenth-century.

[15]A ward in Kano city occupied by the *Wangarawa.*

> they will study what will happen in the year and they will know how to solve the problem.[16]

This story indicates that the title of *dan rimi* was associated with the "creation" and transmission of knowledge in Kano, as was the more general royal slave community. This knowledge was associated with the ability to solve problems, and find solutions, to political difficulties and natural events; it was disseminated outside of the palace, through the metaphor of the well, to the commoners throughout Kano. Although the knowledge acquired by slaves was associated with some aspects of Islam, it was also associated with the prediction of future events; indeed, the *dan rimi* in the story killed the purveyor of this knowledge and then became responsible for it. Starrat records a similar tradition: during the *Habe* period a Madabo *malami* named Malam Isa Gashi complained about the conduct of the *sarki* and was killed by a *dan rimi*.[17] Madabo quarters was said to be the site of the old palace of the *Habe* rulers, where the sacred tree was destroyed by Al-Maghili when Islam first came to Kano in the fifteenth-century.[18] Although the evidence that *Madabo* quarters was a centre of Islamic learning before the nineteenth-century is contradictory,[19] the story nonetheless suggests that the *dan rimi* was attempting to eliminate pre-Islamic

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[16]Interview with *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru Kwaru, 21 August 1996.
[17]Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa," 66. Based on an interview with Malam Abubakar Hussaini Sufi, 23 March 1989.
[18]Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa," 114.
[19]See *Ibid.*, 115, who suggests the ward may have long been a centre of Islamic scholarship and John Chamberlain, "The Development of Islamic Education in Kano City, Nigeria, with Emphasis on Legal Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries" (Ph.D., unpublished, Columbia, 1975), 96-98, who argues for a mid-nineteenth century origin.

history and knowledge. However, the commoners in Kano refused to accept his actions and thus visited the well for the enlightenment it provided. The story also suggests that royal authority eventually emerged triumphant. The *dan rimi* assumed control of the knowledge that was initially outside the control and power of the emir. Tellingly, the end of "slave knowledge" is associated with the reign of Abdullahi Bayero and the coming of the British, who supervised the removal of slaves from high state positions in 1926 and "westernized" (exemplified by tap-water and hospitals) indigenous knowledge and its transmission.[20]

Slave knowledge was also at the heart of the organization of the Kano military. Although free title-holders played an important role in warfare, the emir relied on his slave forces for protection and support. The three senior slaves controlled important military units who defended the emir and formed a central part of the Emirate army.[21] The *sallama* was in charge of the musketeers [*'yan bindiga*], while the *dan rimi* and *sallama* were placed in charge of contingents of *'yan sulke* [soldiers with chainmail], *'yan jibga* [soldiers with the royal head-dress], and *'yan lifidi* [armoured cavalry].[22] Slave musketeers were likely

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[20]See Sean Stilwell, " 'Amana' and 'Asiri': Royal Slave Culture and the Colonial Regime in Kano, 1903-1926" in *Slavery and Abolition* 19, 2 (1998), 167-188.

[21]According to Barth, Kano was able to raise an army of 7,000 horse and 20,000 infantry. See *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 523. In 1885-1886 Paul Staudinger estimated the number of cavalry in Kano at 6,000. See Paul Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, II, 230.

[22]Interviews with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995, *Dan Rimi*, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and Mohammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 28 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. The *Dan Rimi* estimated the number of slave soldiers who lived in and around the palace at 1,000. Another slave title-holder, the *sarkin dogarai*, commanded a body of military units known as *dogarai* who served as the Emir's bodyguards. See interview with *Sarkin Dogarai* Hassan, 22 November 1995.

employed throughout most of the nineteenth century, although Emir Aliyu Babba increased their numbers and their importance.[23]

The core component of the army were the *lifida*, or cotton/quilt armoured cavalry. The *'yan lifida* were held in reserve around ruler and commander "for defense or final assault in phalanx formation."[24] The vanguard of the force also contained a "cluster of lifida, spearmen, bowmen and infantry sheltering between the horses."[25] Commoners were not normally required to take part in offensive campaigns. But if they participated, they did so as foot-soldiers or bowmen (unless they were given a horse and armor by patron). *Hakimai* distributed horses to their ablest kin, slaves and clients, who then were required to present themselves for service. Likewise, the emir distributed horses to *hakimai,* clients and titled slaves, although he rarely took the field himself. The senior slaves only went to battle when the chief went.[26] The field commanders were usually the *makama, madaki,* or *sarkin dawaki.* The emir mobilized his slaves as his core, personal fighting force in order to counterbalance the forces raised by the free aristocracy. Infantry and cavalry regiments were established to serve

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[23]Slave rifleman were also used extensively in Zazzau. According to M.G. Smith, Emir Yero (r. 1890-1897) relied heavily on *'yan bindiga* as a means to enforce his royal authority against free-born title-holders. They also allowed him to regulate the collection of taxation and "overawe" the local population. Thus, during his reign Yero recovered parts of his estate which had been distributed to other title-holders. By relying on slave soldiers, he also reduced his own dependence on the army stationed at Kacia, and was able to decrease the military forces commanded by his rivals, especially the *sarkin yamma* and the *galadima.* M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau,* 189-191.

[24]Smith, *Government in Kano,* 69.

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]*Ibid.*

and protect the emir.[27] As Nast has pointed out, the Kano emirs also employed free troops to counter-balance the power of the slave army. Ibrahim Dabo, Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Aliyu Babba conducted a series of campaigns on the fringes of the Emirate. Royal slaves commanded slave troops used in these wars, mainly against Ningi and Damagaram.

> Officials, who are slaves as a rule, are appointed by the lord of the province to keep an eye on the town kings and at strategic points. Slaves often hold exalted positions, especially in war.[28]

As had been the case throughout much of the nineteenth century, royal slaves were attached to the royal household because they could mobilize and acquire important skills, or fields of knowledge, to the service of the state and the emirship. This was especially evident in regard to the training and employment of slave musketeers. After the Kano Civil War, the newly appointed Emir Aliyu created a new title for one of his personal servants, named Shekarau.[29] While he was given a number of royal *gandaye* to supervise, the title was created to reward

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[27]See Joseph Smaldone, *Historical and Sociological Aspects of Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate*, 130-137. On slave cavalry see Major Denham, Captain Clapperton and Dr. Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823 and 1824*, II, 247 and 356, where slave cavalry are described in February of 1824. Clapperton also saw muskets employed cermonially during the same visit. See also Hugh Clapperton, *Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccato* (London: Frank Cass, 1966-originally published 1829), 186.

[28]Paul Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, I, 35.

[29]Interviews with Alhaji Mohammad, 25 June 1996 and Alhaji Balarabe, 28 July 1996. See also East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*, II, 68. Aliyu's praise song indicates his reliance on slave officials and military conquest: "Great Visitor, son of Abdu/Water it is that drowns whoever goes against it,/It overwhelms even the expert ferry man/Mighty conqueror, sire of Dan Rimi ruthless and cruel/Captain of our spearhead, Giant among men/Mighty conqueror, leader of our horse and foot/Who does not know Abdu's son,/The slippery slope, the downfall of the unwieldy." Cited by Richard P. Brady, "Hierarchy and Authority Among the Hausa," 78.

Shekarau for his support during the *basasa* and was tied specifically to Shekarau's knowledge of *bindiga* or guns/muskets. Shekarau was from Borno, and the new title, *shettima*, was also originally derived from Borno.[30] Shekarau was an expert in the use of guns and was employed by Aliyu (who was also known as "Mai Sango" or "Master" of Gunpowder or a particular kind of ammunition) to train royal slaves to employ guns effectively on the battle-field.[31] According to oral data, he was brought to Kano specifically for this purpose. His personal knowledge of tactics, strategy and the weapons themselves allowed Aliyu to expand the numbers and effectiveness of his slave musketeers. The title was less important than the personal knowledge associated with it:

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[30]See interviews with: *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru, 21 August 1998, *Ciroman Dan Rimi* Isyaku, 30 August 1996 and *Madaki* 4 February 1996. There is a tradition that guns originally came from Borno, then went to Damagaram, then Nupe, then to Kano, a progression suggested by Shekarau's origin in Borno. See interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*: "The Emir of Borno was engaged in the discovery of weapons. He later became skillful in fighting. He was not subordinate to anybody." See also Joseph H. Greenberg, "Linguistic Evidence for the Influence of the Kanuri on the Hausa" in *Journal of African History* I, 2 (1960), 205-212.

[31]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. It is also possible that Shekarau was employed to supervise a number of people brought into Kano by Emir Aliyu to train royal slaves in the use of guns. According to G.P. Bargery, "Sango" does not mean gunpowder, but "a harpoon fired from a gun, or thrown by hand, in elephant hunting." See Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary*, 898. According to Hogben and Kirk-Greene, this was the new weapon Aliyu relied upon, although my oral informants remembered Aliyu specifically in relation to guns and muskets. The *Dan Rimi* in 1975 stated that "Sango" was not gunpowder, but "like an arrow but it fits into a gun [it is] used in shooting. The Sango is not put directly into the gun. Firearms and ammunition would be loaded and the trigger would be pulled then you hear it go bam, it [the Sango] would shoot out with fire, the Sango will follow the bullet catching fire. [It is like the tip of an arrow] except it has a hole. It has no ears like an arrow . . . it has the same shape as ammunition but it has more firing capacity . . . The Sango will pound the flesh. It would come out with fire and when it lands on the top of people's residence or hit an iron shield you will see how it sparks fire, that is sango." The Sango was made by Blacksmiths, possibly in Kano, and was "invented" by Emir Aliyu; see interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*.

> I heard the story from his family that the title of *shettima* is an adopted word from the very person who is shettima. The duties he performs later when someone is appointed he is said to do the work of shettima. From then everybody appointed as *shettima* must act just like his namesake before he could be appointed as *shettima*.[32]

Because royal slaves had access to this kind of knowledge they could threaten the security of the emirship. This is a recurring theme in palace oral tradition; for example, according to some informants, only recently captured or purchased slaves were given guns and trained by the *shettima*. Like *Shettima* Shekarau himself (and unlike palace *cucanawa*), these new slaves were less likely to revolt, as they had no ties with the palace slave community or family descendants on whom to depend. Their ability to establish common cause with other slaves was also significantly diminished because they were unable to speak Hausa. As a result, these slaves were called *baibayi* or "deaf": "no body apart from them had the right to do *bindiga* . . . They are *baybayi* and *sallamawa*, these are the two faces of the *'yan bindiga.*"[33]

Along with Shekarau, Aliyu brought a gun repair specialist from Nupe called Agwada and housed him immediately behind the compound of the *sallama*, close to the blacksmith's work-room.[34] Initially, Agwada performed all the repairs on the guns, and possibly constructed them as well. Over time, local blacksmiths learned from Agwade a variety of

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[32]See interview with *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru, 21 August 1998. According to Alhaji Mohammad, the grandson of *Shettima* Shekarau, someone named "Shettima" lived in *kofar kudu* when he was ten years old (c. 1936) who came from Damagaram. See interview with Alhaji Mohammad, 25 June 1996.

[33]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.

[34]Interviews with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998 and Alhaji Abubukar Soron Dinki 15 November 1995.

repair and construction techniques. The *Dan Rimi* in 1975 (Mohammadu, the son of Allah Bar Sarki, r. 1960-1980) also remembered Agwade, who came to Kano to make guns: "Agwade. That is his name. Here behind the house of *sallama* was the house of Agwade. There was a furnace [*zugazugai*] for blacksmithing . . . He was a Nupe man, he was brought from Nupe where they made guns."[35] Agwade was succeeded by his son, Bandale.[36] It is probable, however, that for most the nineteenth century guns were purchased from Nupe, and from Arab merchants in Kano.[37] According to the *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, Aliyu imported five-thousand guns and ammunition which he distributed among the *shamaki, dan rimi, sallama* and *shettima*.[38] Allah Bar Sarki himself purchased guns for the Yusufawa during the Civil War. Perhaps, by bringing Agwada and creating the title of *shettima*, Aliyu was attempting to reduce Kano's reliance on guns from outside sources. As others have emphasized, the immigration of skilled persons into Kano had a long history in the nineteenth century.[39] *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Maje Karofi brought a

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[35]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995.

[36]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.

[37]See Yusufu Yunusa, Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano," 47. See interviews with: *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975 and Mohammad Sarkin Yaki Dogarai 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* See also Philip James Shea, "The Development of an Export Oriented Dyed Cloth Industry," 42, citing S.J. Hogben and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 204. Aliyu is remembered to have developed good relations with Nupe, and received a new weapon from the "Etsu Nupe." See also Smith, *Government in Kano*, 350.

[38]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[39]The movement of skilled slaves into Kano was coupled with the migration of free persons, who came with skills such as sword making (Tuareg immigrants), weaving (Nupe immigrants), cattle-rearing (Kanuri and Fulani immigrants). Many attracted groups of immigrants from their home regions to Kano, who then settled near them. See Philip J. Shea, "Approaching the Study of Rural Production in Kano," 97.

number of blacksmiths from Agades to Kano in order to increase the production of weapons for the army.[40] Likewise, in the twentieth century Emir Abbas "brought together some Arab immigrants and Bambadawa potters with the result that Kano potters began to produce a kind of oven [*kusha*] for baking bread [*gurasa*]." As Shea notes: "Although this was in the beginning of the twentieth century, it was reproducing an earlier pattern of behavior."[41] Royal slaves served parallel functions: they acquired, perfected and transmitted skills which needed to be controlled by the state and the emir. While the skills they possessed were clearly not divorced from those of some free immigrants, they nonethless became important components of royal slave identity, and of the social and political capital passed down from generation to generation, inside the Kano palace. Thus, when Shekarau died, Emir Abbas replaced him with his brother, Bauchi, who shared skills similar to those of his brother, but was unable to use them completely due to the advent of colonial rule.[42]

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[40]Philip James Shea, "The Development of an Export Oriented Dyed Cloth Industry in Kano Emirate in the Nineteenth Century," 41, citing an interview with Malam Sani, "Market Project Interviews", 1970. Tijani Garba, following Jaggar, also states that Abdullahi enticed the Sankara warriors of Kano Emirate to settle in the city. See P.J. Jaggar, "Kano Blacksmiths: Precolonial Distribution, Structure and Organisation" in *Savanna* 2, 1 (1973), 14 and Tijani Garba, "Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates, c. 1860-1939," 133.

[41]Shea, "Approaching the Study of Rural Production," 114, citing interview with Alhaji Mohammad Ali, 2 August 1980 and Isyaku Ahmed, "Potting Industry in Kano City and Wudil Town" (B.A., unpublished, Bayero University, Kano, 1981), 101-106.

[42]Interviews with Alhaji Mohammad, 25 June 1996, *Kilishi* Mohammad Nasiru, 2 August 1996, *Madakin Dan Rimi* Umaru, 17 August 1996 and *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996.

> One of the soldiers, a Kanuri, sent a revolver gun and bullets in it to the Emir of Kano Aliyu. The soldiers instructed that before the gun was brought to Emir Aliyu that Aliyu should not not wait to fight with the soldiers. He said here is the smallest weapon he sent to him. But he should check amongst his slaves, either amongst the eunuchs or 'Gwado-gwado' people who were brought from the east, he would find someone who could use this gun. Aliyu brought out the gun and asked is there anyone who knows how to use it. Then one of them said, 'Yes he knew how to use it.' Bullets were loaded and he aimed at a wall (near a door of one of the houses there) and shot at it. The wall and door broke down.[43]

Likewise, the title of *mai tafari*, who is the subordinate under the *sallama* in charge of the musketeers and guns, is relatively new, having been created during the reign of Usman (1919-1926). Before Usman, the duties were performed by the *wakilin sallama*. Because the *mai tafari* was created in the 1920's, the person holding the title was less explicitly associated with the employment of guns in war. *Mai Tafari* Hussaini stated that the meaning of the title refers to the sound of the gun that was fired whenever the emir made a declaration.[44] The first gun blast, fired only by the *mai tafari* (literally, the owner of the first one or starter) signaled that the emir had issued an order. The *sallama* was instructed by the emir to order the *mai tafari* to sound the signal.[45] Hussaini's father held the title of *mai tafari* as well; indeed, he was the second person to accede to the position. Hussaini stated that his great grandparents came from Bebeji, and his father, a child at the

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[43]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

[44]Interviews with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998 and Alhaji Sani Mai Yaki, 28 July 1996.

[45]Hence the praise song: "Bugun fari na sarki; Bugun fari na mai tafari [The first firing or "bang" [of a gun] is the Emir's firing, the first firing or "bang" [of a gun] is the mai tafari's firing." Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.

time, was adopted into the house of the *sallama*. His association with the house of the *sallama* provided his father with the opportunity to acquire knowledge about guns which he passed down to later generations: "And this was how we get to become *yan bindiga*. Since our father had done [the work], that was how we inherited it and it became hereditary to us [his family].[46] Thus, the mastery of a body of knowledge was passed down from generation to generation, and became the domain of a particular family who had access to certain titles in which the knowledge was used. This also enabled him to attract the attention and patronage of the emir himself:

> My father did not inherit the title. What really led him to the title and [skills with] guns [*bindiga*] was a result of the fact that he grew up in the house of the Sallama. The house of Sallama was the house in charge of the guns and the work associated with guns [blacksmithing etc]. He rose up in the house because of his interest and ability, in the same way I was motivated by the interest I have about guns and the work associated with guns. He grew up there, and saw how it was done. So with time as he grew older, he became very skilled and famous among them. He was loved by the present Emir.[47]

The *sallama* also supervised the palace blacksmiths, who repaired the muskets, and oversaw the palace armoury which was located in his compound.[48] The guns were guarded with magic, or "ritual protection," to prevent unauthorized access to the guns, which also symbolized the *sallama's* control over the knowledge and the work associated with

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[46]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.

[47]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.

[48]Interviews with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995 and *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998. See also Heidi Nast, "Space, History and Power," 108, citing an interview with *Madakin Kano*, n.d., P.J. Jaggar, "Kano Blacksmiths" and Tijani Garba, "Taxation in Some Hausa Emirates." Nast notes that the ward the *sallama* occupied was named *Rimin Kira*, or: "the silk cotton tree of smithing."

guns.[49] It is likely, however, that the production of weapons for the Emirate army was dispersed among blacksmiths across a wide area, both urban and rural, who produced a variety of spears, swords and arrows.[50] They provided the labour, while the palace generally provided the iron.[51] According to Yunusa, the emir also had slaves who made arms for him, called the *ci-tama* [iron eater] or *sarkin makera babbaku* [chief smith]. Iron was obtained for Ririwai, to the south-west of Kano.[52] Urban and rural were therefore linked via the production of arms for the palace. These links were the overall responsibility of the *sallama.*

Slaves with military skills could move up the ladder of slave offices relatively quickly. Oral tradition associates *Dan Rimi* Nuhu with Aliyu's victory in the civil war because of his military prowess: "Nuhu was the head of the Takai people . . . it was *Dan Rimi* Nuhu who was the leader [*ubansu* or father/leader] of the Takai people. Anyone who wanted to go to Takai was enlisted into the rebel party by *Dan Rimi* Nuhu."[53] *Jakadan Garko* Mainasara commanded the army along with Yusufu in a war against Ningi. The campaign was based at Takai and they tried and failed to dislodge the Ningi from Wachiawa.[54] He was later rewarded for his role in the Civil War. Likewise, *Sallama* Jatau was placed in charge of the defense of Kano during the British invasion of

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[49]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.
[50]Garba, "Taxation in some Hausa Emirates," 136.
[51]*Ibid.* See also Jaggar, "Kano Blacksmiths," 19-21.
[52]Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano," 48-49. See also interviews with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975 and Mohammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*
[53]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.
[54]D.M. East, *Labarun Hausawa Da Makwabtansu,* Vol. II, 28.

1903, and was directed to lead a mounted force of "Telakawa'n Kowye or people from the farms" against the British force moving northward from Zaria.[55] According to oral testimony, when defeat looked inevitable, *Sallama* Jatau gathered the Emir's women from the palace and took them to the Emir's palace at Wasai. He then travelled with the Emir's chief wife, Kubura, to Birnin Goga to meet Aliyu. Soon afterwards, Aliyu and Kubura fled, leaving the army under the effective command of the *Sallama*:

> Then the Salama called for his horse-holder and said, "Go now and seek Dan Rimi and at dawn tomorrow . . . bid him to cause the gong to be sounded as if the Emir were still with us, and you, Usman Mabude see to it that the signal gun for saddling-up is also fired off." Then Salama, the head of the army, came out of his lodgings to announce that the Emir had fled, after which he addressed us warriors . . . For he, Salama, and he, Dan Rimi, they were the greatest of the Emir's slaves, so much so that whenever the Emir rode with his army he was in front, and then Dan Rimi and Salama came behind, and thus was the precedence ordered. After them came the District Chiefs each with their horsemen and footmen and their village heads in his proper order, and so was the army arrayed.[56]

The reliance on slave soldiers increased over the course of the nineteenth century. As noted above, Maje Karofi greatly increased the numbers of slave soldiers, and Aliyu Babba relied even more heavily on his slave warriors and officials. Like a number of previous emirs, Aliyu used the Kano *mamluks* to strengthen his own authority in

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[55]He shared command with the *Sarkin Shanu*, whom G. F. Abadie claimed was also a slave from Gwari. See NAK SNP 17, Historical Documents on the Capture of Kano, Abadie to Lugard, 12 February 1903.

[56]D. J. M. Muffett, *Concerning Brave Captains: Being a History of the British Occupation of Kano and Sokoto and of the Last Stand of the Fulani Forces* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), 101-102. From interviews with Maitama Dan Makaman Dan Rimi and Shehu Dan jekadan Durmin Shura. For a similar account, see interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

Emirate government. Slave knowledge was used as political resource by Aliyu to cement his own control of the emirship best exemplied by the creation of the title of *shettima* and the increased reliance on royal slave musketeers. Slave participation in warfare should be seen in the context of the creation and development of royal slave knowledge.

Households, Networks and Learning in the Royal Slave Community

In the *gidan sarki*, labour was apportioned and mobilized in the houses of royal slaves. It was within royal slave households that knowledge was both acquired and improved. Knowledge about the palace, its history and occupants, was transmitted from person to person formally and informally. [57] The acquisition of new skills was an important goal of many individual royal slaves. Skills were taught to other slaves as a means to attract the emir's attention and to expand the scope of the positions occupied by individual royal slaves and their households. The senior slaves were responsible for providing and organizing a vast amount of labour on behalf of the emir. Their ability to exercise personal power through their subordinates was enhanced should they work through capable and knowledgeable persons. This was the central and defining relationship in the acquisition and

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[57]For a comparative example, see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) who examines the social uses of knowledge and learning in medieval Damascus. He argues that knowledge played an important and central role in the struggle for power among the civilian elites in the city.

transmission of knowledge from generation to generation.[58] As individuals, royal slaves attempted to acquire skills which would offer them the opportunity to advance in the slave hierarchy and the direction a slave career took depended on which skills the slave mastered.[59] Knowledge gradually became "inheritable" within select slave families and households. The following explores the means and methods of "learning" in the royal slave community.

Beyond the possession of a title, the status and influence of an individual royal slave was determined by the number of clients the title-holder attracted to his house, and by the number of slaves he could mobilize for the emir from his household: ". . . power depends on the people that work under you, that is who are taking orders from you."[60] The current *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru remembered that *Dan Rimi* Nuhu was especially powerful because he had a large number of relations:

> . . . he was a warrior and had a lot of relations [*dangi*]. If someone has a lot of relations he is a strong man. If you have a lot of relations, even in a village, you are a great man. You are stronger than other people because of your relations.[61]

On the most basic level, control over people was important because they performed the labour necessary to ensure the palace was able to

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[58]As Ali Ibn Abi Talib noted: "I am the slave of whoever who teaches me one letter of the alphabet. If he wishes he may sell me; if he so desires he may set me free; and if he so cares to he may make use of me as a slave." Ali Ibn Abi Talib, *Zamuji*, 31, cited by Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 108.

[59]See interview with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995.

[60]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 June 1996.

[61]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

reproduce itself. However, skills and knowledge were associated with particular *individuals*. The skills individual slaves possessed gradually became associated with the titles they held. As these "new" skills and knowledge became routinized they became one of the qualifications for the possession of particular slave titles. The skills individual slaves developed were thereby institutionalized during the process of learning and transmission within particular slave households.

> If you know that your father inherited this office, did that work or held that title and he died you can compete or contest for it. Anybody whose father by the grace of God held an office, if the father died, he will look for it. He thought that since his father did it successfully he would do it.[62]

A variety of these skills were transmitted to slaves outside the palace. For example, a former plantation slave made particular reference to the important role royal slaves played in the foundation of royal *gandu*.[63] In his description, Malam Umaru Sarkin Gida emphasized that royal slaves not only supervised the initial foundation of the plantation, including the clearance of trees, but that they also taught the local plantation slaves how to properly care for the emir's farm animals, something in which he appears to have specialized:

> When the Emir made the measurement marks for the establishment of Fanda, it was called Shashuwai meaning that anybody of lowly birth who engages in farming without permission will die after getting the grains there or some misfortune will befall him. When Abdullahi heard of the place, he

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[62]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

[63]According to Alhaja Abba, the senior slaves also had their own farms, cultivated by slaves, that they could use for their own purposes. See interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 1 April 1998. Indeed, Alhaji Abba's father, the son of *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, bought a farm in Panshekera on the advice of Emir Abdullahi Bayero.

> sent his servant, a slave to Alhaji Wakilin Gaya, the son of Sarkin Dogarai for the establishment of Fanda or to clear the bush of Fanda and establish a Gandu. As for this settlement in Hungu, the Shamaki of Kano at present Inuwa Dan Indo led its establishment. He supervised the cutting of trees and the removal of roots-the clearance of bush. After that, Abdullahi sent me to Dorayi to coach them in working with cows and from there I came to Hungu.[64]

Likewise, the course of training for a slave musketeer was explained by *Mai Tafari* Hussaini. Although present methods likely have been incorporated into his description (he refers to a title that did not into exist in the nineteenth century), the important, indeed central relationship highlighted by Hussaini was between the person with knowledge, the expert, and his apprentice, or trainee. This was a personal relationship conducted in the idiom of the slave household or "family." Slaves progessed from menial duties to ones increasingly important and complex under the watchful eye of their "master."

> Whenever there was a new [slave] he will be attached with someone who has acquired long experience, who is an expert, to work as his [the expert's] apprentice. He will carry the gun wherever they are going, watching all that is going on. Let's say when the emir is coming out or going around the town, then his master will give him [the apprentice] the gun to hold. Until he is collecting the gunpowder then he will take the gun along with him, and go and collect it from *mai tafari*. The apprentice will be observing how he is operating [the gun], until the time when it seems he has learned the theoretical aspects of it. Then he will be put through a practice test. He will be given half of the amount [gunpowder] that his master can take [or use]. And even then, he will not be left on his own. His master will be instructing him on how to do it: "hold it here, touch this, press that, grab this." His master will support him. He will not be allowed to hold it alone because he is learning and could easily get wounded. The training went on until he seems to be good [skilled], then he will be left to do it on his own, but still under the

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[64]Interview with Malam Umaru Sarkin Gida, 1/2/1976, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 19 March 1998.

> watchful eye of his master. If he made a mistake he can then correct him.[65]

The aristocracy was not completely isolated from slave knowledge. Because the sons of emirs were generally raised in the households of royal slaves, they were in effect trained in the arts of war, politics and power by slave title-holders and other members of their households. This served as a powerful means to incorporate the elite into a broad political culture and tradition.

Although the relationship described above was an "individual" one, training was formalized, followed a prescribed course, and was designed to impart specific skills. Furthermore, this system evolved over the course of the nineteenth century in the context of the development of royal slave households. Slaves acquired knowledge and passed this "inheritance" to their clients and descendants. Individuals acquired knowledge by associating with the senior slaves, who taught favoured household members the skills necessary to hold the highest slave offices. Slaves showed they were skilled by impressing the slave in charge of an office or household with their abilities.[66] These networks were the avenues through which patronage was dispensed and through which each slave was politically and socially linked to the emir; moreover, they were profoundly hierarchical and competitive in

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[65]Interview with *Mai Tafari* Hussaini, 12 March 1998.
[66]Interview with *Sarkin Bagarmi*, 23 August 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and NAK SNP 7/13 6824/1912

nature.[67] To gain access to skills, subordinate royal slaves had to provide their mentors with political and economic support in return.

Overall, in the latter part of the nineteenth century "slave" knowledge had become a form of "cultural capital" which served to maintain the distinctive social and political positions held by royal slaves.[68] Knowledge allowed them to manipulate and acquire the symbols of power and thus enhance their own positions in the social hierarchy. This "cultural capital" included rights, duties and obligations which affirmed their place as favoured, powerful and privileged slaves.[69] In one sense, they were made "more equal" than free commoners who had no access to the symbols of power and privilege.[70] Royal slaves tried to ensure their sons gained the necessary skills and knowledge to grant them access to a broad range

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[67]See Ira M. Lapidus, "Hierarchies and Networks: A Comparison of Chinese and Islamic Societies" in F.J. Wakemann (ed.), *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 1975) and Masashi Haneda and Toru Miura (eds.), *Islamic Urban Studies: Historical Review and Perspectives* (London, 1994).

[68]See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" in J.G. Richardson, (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241-258. Bourdieu extended the idea of capital to include all forms of power: material, cultural and educational, for example. He argues that individuals and groups draw upon a variety of cultural and social symbolic resources to maintain and enhance their positions in social order. Therefore, it is possible to discuss rights, duties, obligations as capital that is built up over course of generations, and which is unequally distributed. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 159-183 and David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 7, 66-67, 73.

[69]See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 179.

[70]See David Parkin, "Introduction" in David Parkin (ed.), *Semantic Anthropology* (London: Academic Press, 1982), xlvi: "Power, then, returns to our centre in social anthropology. But it is not simply power which rests on the acquisition of land, myth and material objects, but rather that which comes from unequal access to semantic creativity, including the capacity to nominate others as equal or unequal, animate or inanimate, memorable or abject, discussor or discussed." Royal slaves gathered cultural capital in a variety of ways: they took part in government, wore robes of state, rode horses, participated in councils and the court, had privileged access to the emir, all of which served to reinforce their symbolic position as powerful administrators, soldiers and aristocrats. See Chapter Two.

of slave titles. Should a son not inherit a title from his father, he would nonetheless be able to provide for his own household, as well as those in his father's house who were displaced after the father's death. Although they were denied the inheritance of material capital, the senior slaves passed down "cultural capital" thus ensuring their progeny had access to the material rewards of office.

Royal slaves manipulated the distribution of cultural capital to further their own ends despite being constrained by the instruments of their power and privilege. Slaves were neither totally dispossessed nor totally empowered; rather, their power and position shifted with circumstances and the social position or terrain in which they were operating. This dynamic was central to the manner in which many royal slave systems operated. Although theorists such as Bourdieu and Gramsci[71] suggest that the reproduction of the social order - in this case the royal slave system - was by and large a function of forces beyond the active consciousness of individuals, I argue that in the case of Kano, royal slaves defined their interests and acted to further those interests through a variety of reproductive strategies. Of course, they operated with many different voices, under a variety of constraints (some of which were not consciously determined), and all of their actions were not necessarily "rational" and based on their own

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[71]This is the basis of Bourdieu's concept of *Habitus*, which is defined as the habits, traditions, customs and beliefs, or the cultural and social legacy of the past, that filter and shape individual and collective responses to the present and future. Thus, Bourdieu argues that action is not goal oriented, but occurs at a "tacit, prereflective level of awareness that occurs throughout time." See Swartz, 69-72 and Dagmar Engles and Shula Marks (eds.), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994). On Gramsci, see Renate Holub, *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1992).

objective interests.[72] Yet, as individuals and as a community, royal slaves mobilised knowledge to contest their place and position in Kano.[73] They standardized certain forms of knowledge, such as the care of horses or the use of muskets, in order "to dominate the definition of the situations of their use and forms of knowledge in practice."[74]

However, their participation in the system also ensured that royal slaves remained *slaves*. Their access to certain forms of knowledge was a sign of the reality that they were indeed slaves. The free-born elite regarded these skills as beneath their own status and honour. The care and upkeep of horses were of course essential skills, and they in turn provided avenues to power; but, by engaging in these activities, slaves were symbolically reaffirmed as slaves. Even the palace Qur'anic schools were divided into three groups: one for slaves, one for

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[72]See David L. Schoenbrun, "Gendered Histories Between the Great Lakes: Varieties and Limits" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 29, No. 3 (1996), 46: [We] must also recognize a middle ground between the dominators and the dominated, a middle ground where discursively creative people do not accept all the terms and conditions of dominant groups, and where they engage with some of those terms and conditions, but not others."

[73]See M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: Vol. I, A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6, who argues that power is the ability to pursue and attain goals, while "social power" is the power that some people have over others, and the power of collective action: "whereby persons in cooperation can enhance their joint power over third parties or nature." Cited in Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 6-9.

[74]Jean Lave, "The Values of Quantification" in John Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 88. See also Robin Law, *The Horse in West African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 63; 75-76. Hausa elite slaves were used in early nineteenth century Oyo for their specialist skills in the upkeep, care and management of horses and their equipment. One slave, for example, was known as the "Olokun Esin" or "the holder of the horse's bridle." See *ibid.*, 75-76 and Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire, c. 1600-c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

women, and one for children.[75] While royal slaves could and did appropriate the symbols of power and authority, the very act of appropriation and adoption solidified their positions as slaves. Knowledge was not just a means to achieve political success, but a component of a system of power that underlay the relationship between slave and free, aristocrat and commoner, in Kano Emirate. [76]

"Knowing," or the ability "to know," was limited to certain fields of knowledge. Slave knowledge was defined as *sani*, or the ability to understand and perform certain skills. They did not have access to *ilimi* or theoretical knowledge about religion and the history of Islam. While some royal slaves were literate, many were not, and never expected to be. Whenever informants were asked if slaves participated in legal or judicial decisions, they stated that slaves were not able to participate in matters of Islamic Law (*Shari'a*). Yet, they acknowledged that slaves did serve the court by introducing claimants, arresting defendants and by serving as general intermediaries. Likewise, the role that royal slaves played in the collection of *zakka* or the Islamic tithe was generally downplayed, because this was viewed as the prerogative of Malams. Of course, the political economy and social structure of the palace has changed dramatically since the pre-colonial period. But, even now, knowledge is categorized as

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[75]Interview with *Ciroman Dan Rimi* Isyaku, 30 August 1996.

[76]In general, the control of knowledge granted the ability to regulate and control "discourse" - cultural, intellectual and social terminology - that sustains hierarchies of power; indeed, those who control and possess knowledge also have the power to control the meanings and definitions of social life, and to regulate their exchange and interaction. Royal slaves were victims as well as the beneficiaries of this process. See Tim Dant, *Knowledge, Ideology and Discourse: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1991), 199-200.

"accessible" or "inaccessible," based on the possession of skills and learning. *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru stated this about his own learning in a response to a question whether he knew the history of the *Kano Chronicle*:

> No. I have told you several times I am not schooled or learned. Even our own [Islamic leaning] I don't know it, let alone your own [European learning]. Who told me about this Kano Chronicle? You must know Arabic before you can know the Kano Chronicle. I know nothing about it. I can only read enough in order to pray, but any other learning I just see but don't understand it. I have nothing to do with them, and I am old and about to die.[77]

The current *dan rimi* (referred to above) sees the palace as a world in decline; he no longer is able to garner the respect and rewards that should be accorded someone of his lineage and title. In effect, the "cultural capital" associated with the title, and the personae of important past title-holders has not been inherited by many current title-holders.[78] Nonetheless, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Dan Rimi* Barka still exemplified the strength and persistence of royal slave cultural and symbolic capital. Barka drew on his reputation, knowledge, and close relationship with Dabo to further establish the position of his progeny in the slave hierarchy. Thus, Dan Kaka, Hamza, Malam, Nuhu and Yahaya all held the position of *dan rimi*. Furthermore, Nuhu and Yahaya were specifically linked to Barka as a means to legitimize their position and place as *dan rimi*. Like Barka, their knowledge and ability was a central component in the

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[77]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.
[78]See interview with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995.

stability and development of Kano government. They inherited not just the title from Barka, but were associated with his knowledge, ability and success as *dan rimi*. According to *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, Barka "was very famous. All these ones too, *Dan Rimi* Yahaya and Nuhu, are famous too. Most of what you see is their handiwork. They brought glory to this place; like *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, during his time everything is under his control."[79] The possession of the title itself, and one's relationship with Barka (and thus with his personal knowledge), was an important element in the power and position of the slave title-holder. Indeed, the title of *dan rimi* did not exist elsewhere in Hausaland. Even within Kano Emirate, the *hakimi* were forbidden to use the title, or to appoint a follower to any office named *dan rimi*.[80]

This pattern was not only a feature of the office of *dan rimi*. Senior slave title-holders were generally referred to as the "inheritor" of the first slave, or in some cases the most important slave, who held the title: "Any *shamaki* is referred to as *magajin* or successor of Ahoda [the "first" *shamaki*]. But this house is Barka, that house is Ahoda. Any *dan rimi* is referred to as *magajin* Barka."[81] The notion of "inheritor" means more than the "inheritor" of the title in question. It also represents the fact that royal slaves could inherit and acquire cultural capital from the first slave [or the most important slave] to hold the title. Although many slave titles were not normally acquired by inheritance, the knowledge and skill of the title-holder *was* inherited;

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[79]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.
[80]Interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30-31 March 1998 and *Ciroman Dan Rimi* Isyaku, 30 August 1996.
[81]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

the title-holders acquired and manipulated the knowledge of their predecessor. Alhaji Kabiru, who is the *Shamaki* of *Turakin Kano*, and a relative of the current *Dan Rimi*, placed special emphasis on the fields of knowledge that certain titles encompassed:

> *sallama* and *dan rimi* are unique. And all are classified into houses and their duties . . . *dan rimi* deals with scholars, external and internal affairs. *Shamaki* is between the emir and his materials. Records of events, works, budgets and the like. We found all this in the records of our grandfather, *Dan Rimi* Mohammad . . . No matter how you come to the title, you must be able to understand any problems [associated with the work and position of title you will hold.][82]

Knowledge was also associated with the concept of *asiri* or "secrets." The royal slave community was (and is) zealous in its defense of palace secrets, secrets which they controlled and which gave them power.[83] The importance placed on these secrets reflects the fact that certain forms of knowledge were powerful and socially useful to slaves only if they were able to ensure that they remained "secret," and thus the sole property of the royal slave community. Indeed, *Babban Zagi* Garba stated that after the death of an emir the royal slaves had to be contacted before a new emir could be assigned, because they knew the candidates (and their secrets) intimately.[84] Certainly, some secrets were and are related to family relationships and the personal histories of palace occupants, to which "outsiders" should not be privy. It was

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[82]Interview with *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru Kwaru, 21 August 1996.
[83]As A.C.G. Hastings noted: "They carefully guarded what they called their 'asiri' (secrets), and the Resident was usually met by a 'blank wall' when he tried to get information." NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921.
[84]Interview with *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998. See also interview with *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995 and Chapter Five.

hinted to me that the free elite were therefore forced to treat royal slaves properly and with deference, otherwise their secrets would be released and consumed by all of Kano.[85] The access royal slaves had to secrets refers to their access to knowledge, to information about the palace, the districts, horses, plantation management, and military strategy which they controlled and which therefore solidified their social and political influence in Kano Emirate: "whatever the Emir had, north and south, east and west, was in the hands of dan rimi."[86] The possession and transmission of knowledge was one method of incorporating individuals into a group or collectivity. The possession of knowledge (and secrets) made royal slaves "insiders", they belonged to the palace and could make others "unequal" by virtue of their association with royalty.

> What we treat as knowledge is created by people in groups . . . knowledge is produced as the people who make up society, work out their lives together. What is generated as knowledge and what is taken as knowledge reflects the values and the sociological features of society.[87]

The Question of the Kano Chronicle

That the *dan rimi* was associated with "scholarship" or "books" as noted above is possibly a reflection of Ibrahim Barka's, Yahaya's and Nuhu's role as the custodians of Kano history. According to Starrat, the royal slaves were responsible for reading from a text called the

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[85]See interview with *Babban Zagi* Garba, 28 February 1996.
[86]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.
[87]Dant, *Knowledge, Ideology and Discourse*, 3.

Bude Takarda or *Karatun Cika Shekara* [Opening of the Book or Reading at the Completion of the Year]. During this ceremony, prayers were given and charms were distributed to guard against any misfortune in the coming year.[88] Palace tradition also asserts that the *dan rimi* was in charge of maintaining palace history. Scholars who visited Kano were placed in the house of the *Dan Rimi.*[89] According to Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, it is possible that *Dan Rimi* Barka wrote or compiled the *Kano Chronicle*: "Muhammad Bello probably commissioned the 'Kano Chronicle' in an effort to assure that the succession would remain in his family and not revert to the sons of Emir Abdullahi, especially Yusufu."[90] This is, however, unlikely, given the fact that Ibrahim Barka was probably long dead.[91] However, Malam Barka, or *Dan Rimi* Malam, who is said to have been alive in the 1880's, when he was deposed by Bello, may have been involved in its compilation. Regardless of the authorship question, Ibrahim Barka's progeny and the house of *dan rimi* were associated with the care and control of the *Kano Chronicle.* These individuals thus had control over the "official" version of palace history. Most importantly, after the British conquest R.C. Temple, H.R. Palmer and W.F. Gowers came to rely on these "official" histories to help determine British policy. Nuhu played an

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[88]Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa," 65.
[89]Interview with Alhaji Kabiru, *Shamakin Turakin Kano*, 21 August 1996.
[90]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 43.
[91]See Chapter Two. Barka would have been 93 in 1883.

important role in the compilation of Temple's "Notes on the History of Kano," composed after the "*waziri* crisis" of 1908/09.[92]

According to Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, neither Malam Barka, Nuhu nor Yahaya wrote the *Chronicle*, but they were responsible for ensuring it was updated and continued, at least in the nineteenth century.[93] They possibly gathered together learned malams and scholars, where events were discussed and then later recorded by the then *dan rimi* or his scribe. The abrupt ending of the *Chronicle* in the mid to late 1880's was perhaps a result of Yahaya's unwillingness to provide Bello with a historical justification to pass the throne to his son, Tukur. Another possibility, hinted at by Kwaru, was that Bello seized the *Chronicle* from its custodians.[94] As demonstrated previously, the relationship between Nuhu, Yahaya and Bello was increasingly strained over the course of the latter's reign. Most of Barka's progeny were not closely allied to the house of Mohammad Bello: Malam was deposed; Yahaya and Bello were often at odds, and Yahaya supported Yusufu's nomination for the emirship; and, finally, Nuhu was the personal slave of Yusufu and became Aliyu's *dan rimi.* The Chronicler also referred to a slave named "Naamu (Nasamu)" during the reign of Maje Karofi, claiming he was the *shamaki.* Nasamu was actually the first *shamaki* under *Sarkin Kano* Ibrahim Dabo. Perhaps, by naming both Barka and

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[92]See Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes of the History of Kano," 44; 65-67. Given the increased importance of the office of *waziri* during the colonial period, the fact that Yusuf is said to have been *waziri* while Tukur was said to have been *galadima* suggests a certain pro-Yusufawa bias on the part of the compiler or the informants involved. In fact, it was Aliyu who appointed the first *waziri* in Kano.

[93]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996. See also Priscilla Starrat in "Oral History in Muslim Africa," 126.

[94]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

Nasamu, the Chronicler was deliberately identifying those slaves who remained loyal to the house and progeny of Abdullahi, but did not refer to the specific names of the royal slaves involved, and rather transposed Barka and Nasamu as the representatives and progenitors of this pro-Yusufawa royal slave faction.

As suggested above, the authorship and the date of composition of the *Kano Chronicle* remains a controversial subject.[95] The document is essentially concerned with both the nature of government and power. Most especially, it describes the manner in which power was historically exercised and provides suggestions about the legitimate use of power in Kano Emirate. The *Kano Chronicle* is, then, an interpretation of the past set in the context of the political and social difficulties of the nineteenth century. The author of the *Kano Chronicle* suggests that threats to the established political order were usually the result of internal crises that originated from the assumption of undue power and influence by officials and title-holders. They challenged the *sarki* for political ascendancy in the palace. The king responded by attempting to balance various interests at the court as a means to centralize political power.[96] This support for strong,

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[95]See John Hunwick, "A Historical Whodunnit: The So-Called 'Kano Chronicle' and its Place in the Historiography of Kano" in *History in Africa* 21 (1994), 127-146, John Hunwick, "Not Yet *The* Kano Chronicle: King Lists with and without Narrative Elaboration from Nineteenth Century Kano" in *Sudanic Africa* iv, (1993), 95-130, Murray Last, "Historical Metaphors in the Kano Chronicle" in *History in Africa* 7 (1980), 161-178; M.G. Smith, "The *Kano Chronicle as History*" in Bawuro M. Barkindo (ed.), *Studies in the History of Kano* (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1983), 31-56 and Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 7-76.

[96]See John Hunwick, "A Historical Whodunnit: The So-Called 'Kano Chronicle' and its Place in the Historiography of Kano," 127-146 and John Hunwick, "Not Yet *The* Kano Chronicle: King-Lists with and without Narrative Elaboration from nineteenth-Century Kano," 95-130.

authoritative kingship established the basis for the use of royal slaves in government beginning with the reign of Muhammed Rumfa in the fifteenth century.[97] It demonstrates that Kano was ruled through the emir's household, as he attempted to increase its size, power and stability by securing the support of kin and by recruiting royal slaves for service to the state. Of course, in many cases, royal slaves played only a minor role in many events; yet, on certain occasions we can catch a glimpse of the social attitudes and political necessities that governed their use in Kano, possibly from the eyes of a nineteenth century slave official.

The pattern of the *Chronicle* is to describe the effects of increasing political competition between the households of rulers, the households of the lineal descendants of the rulers, and the households of the agnatic relations of the rulers, culminating with the restoration of stability by the imposition of a slave based centralized administration. The reigns of Mohammad Rumfa and Babba Zaki both conform to this general pattern. *Sarkin Kano* Mohammed Rumfa's (c. 1463-c. 1499) reforms were aimed at reducing the considerable power of these leading officials. Central to his policy was the use of royal slaves in government as an alternative to the free-born aristocracy.[98] Thus, the description of his reign contains a long list of eunuchs and the positions they were given.[99] Likewise, Babba Zaki (c. 1768-c. 1776)

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[97]For a comparative discussion focusing on the relationship between kingship and slavery in Africa See D. A. Strickland, "Kingship and Slavery in African Thought: A Conceptual Analysis" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18 (1976), 371-394.
[98]See Chapter One.
[99]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 111-112.

instituted a second series of reforms that curbed the power of both free and slave households.[100]

Likewise, The *Kano Chronicle* records that Yukufu [Yakufu],[101] Dauda[102] and Abubakar Kado[103] were all deposed as the result of dynastic and aristocratic conflict. These conflicts originated in the conflict between Rumfa's own descendants and others in officialdom for control of the kingship. Hauwa, the wife or concubine of Mohammad Rumfa, gave birth to Abdullahi, *Sarkin Kano* 1499-1509: "Her influence was very strong among the rulers of the day."[104] She is attributed with the creation of the office of Queen Mother or *maidaki.* Lamis was the concubine or wife of Abdullahi, and gave birth to Muhammadu Kisoki, *Sarkin Kano* c. 1509-1565. Kisoki is said to have ruled Kano along with his grandmother (*Maidaki*) Hauwa, his mother (*Magajiya*) Lamis, and the brother of Hauwa, Guli. After Kisoki's death, Yakufu was appointed, and in rapid succession, Yakufu and the next *Sarki*, Daudu, were deposed. Yakufu was deposed by Guli, Hauwa's brother, who was later killed by *Galadima* Sarkatunya. Yakufu's son, Daudu was likewise deposed in c. 1565 and was then replaced by Abubakar Kado, the son of Hauwa and Mohammad Rumfa, the same household that had been deprived of the throne when Dauda and

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[100]See also Chapter Two for a complete description.
[101]*Ibid.*, 114: "Guli [or Gulle, an untitled but powerful courtier] deposed him. The Galadima Kano Sara Katunia and Guli carried on a civil war."
[102]*Ibid.*, 114: "He ruled one month and twenty days before he was turned out."
[103]*Ibid.*, 114-115: "Abubkr Kado did nothing but religious offices. He disdained the duties of Sarki . . . He gave his sons great wealth . . . He ruled Kano seven years and six months and then was deposed."
[104]See Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 112-113 and Smith, *Government in Kano*, 136-142.

Yakufu were appointed.[105] The reliance on eunuchs should be seen in the context of the depositions of these kings.

Like Mohammad Rumfa, both Abubakar Kado and his successor, Mohammadu Shashiri (c. 1573-c. 1582), relied heavily on their eunuchs, who became even more numerous and influential in palace life: "[Shashiri] was the first to give a eunuch the title of Wombai (the eunuch was called Damu). He also gave to a eunuch called Dabba the title of Sarkin Dawaki."[106] In Shashere's reign the competing factions included the allied lineages of the Queen mothers Lamis and Hauwa, a divided officialdom, a clerical faction, Yakufu's issue, and the seven sons of Abubakar Kado, the previous king.[107] This was clearly a dangerous and unstable political situation. Therefore, Shashere gave the eunuchs Damu, Dabba and Mabayi seats on the state and electoral councils in an effort to appropriate key military and political positions to the throne via his slave officials.[108] Two other eunuchs, *San Turaki Mayna* Narai and *San Turaki Kuka* Zuga were also extremely influential. Although they were officially appointed to supervise the King's household and bedchamber, they also played an important role in Shashere's war against Katsina, when they were the "only" officials who did not desert the *Sarki* during the battle. Shashere was later faced with a plot hatched by his own brothers (the sons of Yakufu) to

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[105]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 114-115.
[106]*Ibid.*, 115.
[107]See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 145-146 and Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 114-115.
[108]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 146. Smith notes that the title of *wombai* and *sarkin dawaki* included military commands and large estates.

overthrow and kill him.[109] *San Turaki Mayna* over-heard and informed the king. In order to foil the plot, Narai dressed in Shashere's royal robes and went to the mosque with nine slaves and eighteen members of Shashere's household.[110] Narai, the nine slaves and twelve from the household were killed by the plotters: "[t]he new Sarki Mohamma Zaki intended to kill [the remaining] six, but they prayed and begged him saying: 'Spare us and we will be your slaves, we are your grandchildren.' "[111] Zaki was the son of Kisoki, who was the grandson of Rumfa; but, he was not the product of the union between Kisoki and Lamis but between Kisoki and Hausatu. In order to secure his own position, Mohammad Zaki appointed Adarka the *sarkin jarmai* and moved him into a house in the *sarki's* compound. The *sarkin jarmai* was the captain of the slave cavalry or *lifida*.[112] However, to balance the power of the slaves, Zaki also settled free horsemen inside the palace as well, and gave the title *sarkin jarmai* to a free man. This story highlights the political and symbolic importance of royal slaves. In the text, royal slaves are associated with the acquisition of secrets and information, the emir's household, and one symbolically represents the

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[109]These four brothers (along with Shashere the sons of Yakufu) were sent to Kwarmashe to farm after Dauda (another son of Yakufu) was deposed by Abubakar Kado. When their brother Shashere became King, he brought them back to Kano. See Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 112-114 and Smith, *Government in Kano*, 145-146.

[110]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 115. See also Smith, *Government in Kano*, 147. When *San Turaki* Narai heard of their plans the Chronicler states that he told Shashere not to "go outside your house . . . or you will be killed.' So the Sarki remained in his house, while San Turaki acted as Sarki."

[111]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 115.

[112]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 149 and Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle*, 116. See also Heidi J. Nast, "Space, History and Power," 81-82.

king, an ultimate act of loyalty which represents the "ideal" at the foundation of the system.

Beyond the Gates of the Palace: Royal Slaves and Rural Kano

The emir used these slaves as a means to enforce his own will, and to govern Kano from the centre outward. He depended on royal slaves not just for advice, but for information about the palace, the districts and affairs with other emirs and emirates. These networks of knowledge extended from palace into the districts, where individuals who were members of the households of certain royal slaves channeled information (knowledge) about the districts back to their patrons and providers at the court. Although Polly Hill has argued that Kano government had no "properly organised, institutionalised, hierarchy of authority,"[113] in point of fact institutionalised networks of authority, knowledge and individuals emanated from the capital. Royal slavery, as an institution, effectively governed and administered the Emirate. Royal slaves tied the centre to the periphery in Kano, through personal relationships and contact, face to face ties of obligation, dependency, coercion and profit, all bound together by the institutionalized framework of offices and titles, the emirship, Islam and the legal courts in Kano. The rural and urban were bound together economically, through production and exchange, and by the political networks of knowledge and information that served as the basis for the

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[113]Polly Hill, *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano, 1900 and 1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 3.

administration of Kano Emirate. Outside Kano city, the countryside was not isolated and empty, nor was it dominated by subsistence farming; rather, it was the home of thousands of farms, hamlets and villages which were centres of rural production for the Emirate. This was a vast region of permanent cultivation, or in Hausa *karakara* [land, near a city, covered with hamlets and farms], through which many trade routes passed.[114] In this sense, "Districts" were not territorial units, but "collections" of people, who worked the land and were taxed under the authority and supervision of a title-holder and his representatives in Kano:

> The lands . . . arbitrarily assigned to the rapacious rule of the Emir's nominees were frequently not homologous. A district which happened to be available owing to the death or removal of its feudal Chief would be granted to a favourite, irrespective of whether it lay near his territory or not . . . It came about that a territorial Chief might hold jurisdiction over and claim taxes from, a number of detached areas situated like islands in the heart of another jurisdiction.[115]

The state officials or *hakimai* were not resident administrators, but delegated the supervision of their territory to subordinates or *jakadu.*[116] Their most important duty was to collect taxes from the inhabitants of the districts, which would in turn support the Kano bureaucracy and government.[117] The officials responsible for the day to day supervision

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[114]Polly Hill, *Population, Prosperity and Poverty*, 7.

[115]Frederick Lugard, *Political Memoranda: Revisions of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative*, A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, ed. (London, 1970), 181.

[116]See *Northern Nigeria Annual Report*, 1904, 220: "[the] Fief-Holder resided at [the] capital, taxes [were] collected by *Jakada.*" See also C.N. Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate*, 17-19.

[117]See Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death For Slavery* and Tijani Garba, "Taxation in some Hausa Emirates, c 1860-1939."

of villages in the districts were called *dagatai*. Both Lugard and Hill have taken it at face value that the organization of this system made rulership and government haphazard, tentative and fragile. Rather, I argue that the system reflected the manner in which "the political" was conceptualized and organized in Kano and beyond. Highly personalized networks of power and authority connected the urban and rural. Royal slaves dominated and controlled the flow of knowledge and information that came from the rural population to the title-holders and emirs of Kano. Land was often attached to an office and the authority officials wielded was fundamentally derived from their ability to mobilize clients and slaves who could effectively manage the collection of taxation and the supervision of these territories.[118] Such abilities were normally the prerogative of slave officials (although the free-born could also hold positions as *jakadu*), who were trained by the Kano royal slave community.

Royal slaves had greater access to different categories of knowledge than did the majority of free-born title-holders because they performed a wider variety of duties. In pre-colonial Kano, District Heads resided in Kano and spent very little time in their districts. Royal slaves had privileged access to the emir, his household, the palace establishment and to the farms and villages in the districts outside Kano city. Royal slaves acquired knowledge about the districts under the general

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[118]See Frederick Lugard, *Instructions to Political and Other Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1906), 9: "The Fiefs belonging to one Chief were often small, and scattered over the Emirate at great distances from each another. They usually pertained to the office and not to the individual. The result was that the Fief-Holder (who might own a dozen or a score of estates) could not, of course, reside on his estate and administer a self-contained district, but became an "absentee landlord," resident at the capital."

supervision of free *hakimi* by virtue of their positions as the "gates." The slave *kofa* was essentially in charge of the administration of the districts under his control. While formal administrative duties were held by the various *hakimai*, by virtue of his position with the emir, the *kofa* of a particular town or village made important administrative decisions and could offer advice and recommendations about policy. In 1904, H.R.P. Hillary analyzed the precolonial administration in the Sokoto Caliphate like this:

> . . . no one, however important, can gain access to the Emir except through a "Kofa", gate, ie introducer. The "Kofa" is the patron of his district, its representative at Court; he looks after its interests, puts forward its claims, requests or grievances, procures for it protection or assistance in case of war. It can easily be understood what an advantage it is to a town to have a powerful "Kofa." On the other hand the Emir holds the patron responsible for the administration of his district, for the promulgation and performance of his orders, for the arrest of criminals, for information as to the right man in case of succession, and for the payment of all moneys due . . . .[119]

Of course, if free title-holders of high status administered a District, the role of the *kofa* could often become simply the transmission of orders or information, as the district headman or *hakimai* was responsible for the District in question. However, in the case of smaller districts, the *kofa* often became the district head. Hillary noted that without the *kofa* he would not have been able to identify the "herd owners, nor obtained the information on which to assess them, nor enforced payment, the Sarkin Muslimin could not have provided the information on which to assess the land tax."[120]

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[119]NAK SOKPROF 3/27 s.2909. See also NAK SNP 15/1 Acc 109.
[120]NAK SOKPROF 3/27 s. 2909.

Thus, by virtue of their positions, slave *kofofi* acquired a familarity with the intricacies of political and economic life in many of the Districts.

> Distinction should be made between those persons who are employed by the Emir for purposes of his household and those who are employed on official business. It is easy to say that all satellites must be got rid of, but I think it will probably be found that these much abused satellites are really doing useful work. It must be of great assistance to the Emir to have an intermediary between him and the D. Heads. He cannot be expected to remember the details of a thousand transactions, and the intermediary with his special knowledge of the Districts and of precedents is useful.[121]

Control and access to knowledge allowed royal slaves easy recourse to extortion, bribery and other forms of political corruption. They controlled and monitored a large number of exchanges between representatives from the Districts and the emir. This provided royal slaves with access to income, as they demanded a gift or bribe before allowing any person, free or slave, to be conveyed into the presence of the emir.[122] Emirate officials who wished to see the emir normally had to provide financial compensation to the slave official who served as their "gate."[123] After 1903, the British complained that the *kasheka* and *kilishi* had demanded compensation from anyone seeking an audience with the *alkali*. They noted that this practice had long been

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[121]NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921.

[122]Interview with Alhaji Mohammad Hassan, 10 March 1998. Royal slaves also seized property, such as homes and farms, for their own use or to distribute among their followers, see Chapter Five. See also NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909: "Further under the new district scheme, the Emir's Court still affords the Emir's slaves a powerful lever for interfering in the Hakimai's districts; for, there is not a Sariki [sic] in Kano, who cannot be cited before the Emir's court upon some frivolous complaint, and kept dangling about at Kano awaiting the hearing of his case until he has been well fleeced by one of the big slaves."

[123]See SNP 10/9 120p/1921 for comments on royal slave wealth.

entrenched in Kano because royal slaves controlled access to the emir, the court and the palace in general:

> Every District Head in Kano has his intermediary between him and the Alkali. The object of the intermediary is to delay cases as much as possible. They refuse to take people to the Alkali unless they get 'refreshers'. This is why so many complaints come up to the D.O. because (if the Petty Complaint Book is properly kept) he can ensure their case being tried. But even after this, delays were needlessly caused by pretended necessity for witnesses or by not summoning witnesses. I had many complaints against Kilishi and Kasheka on these grounds.[124]

Likewise, royal slaves used their positions and the control of knowledge to confiscate property and money from both the elite and commoners. This gave them access to significant material resources.[125] Royal slaves also acquired wealth through similar roles in the administration of justice. The *alkali* forwarded judicial cases to the emir through the *makaman dan rimi*, who was appointed directly by the emir.[126] The *makaman dan rimi*, as well as other royal slaves extracted money from people who wanted to come before the emir's court.[127] Staudinger even noted that: "the courtiers who are charged with the execution of the King's orders are quite unsuitable tools of justice because they lay themselves open to bribery and . . . they will

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[124]NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921.

[125]As a comparative example, in Daura a slave with the title of *sarkin bai* wielded more power than the previous two Emirs, whom he deposed. After *Sarkin Bai* Dan Kanyo was exiled by the British, he sent a list of property which he had left behind to the officer in charge, which serves as a good illustration of royal slave wealth. His list included: 20 slaves, 23 horses, 35 cows, 37 boxes of robes, 20 kwandaye [silver anklets, worth approximately 100,000 cowries each]. He also had four wives, numerous concubines, 13 daughters and 17 sons. M.G. Smith, *Affairs of Daura*, 45.

[126]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 28 February 1996 and 26 July 1996. Therefore, only the Emir could alter his responsibilities.

[127]See Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 82, Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 525, Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, I, 230-231.

usually side with the accused in order to extort as much money as possible."[128] In 1908 the British abolished the emir's court because of irregularities and the influence of royal slaves on the entire process.[129] Some of the irregularities included the unauthorized transfer of cases from the *alkali's* court to the emir's court (thus allowing those accused of crimes, who also had the financial means, an opportunity to bribe the royal slaves to prevent complainants from attending), the disappearance of witnesses, or false claims that prisoners had escaped.[130] This all led Major Festing to state that "the real object of the institution of the Emir's Court was to concentrate all power in the hands of the Emir and the palace clique. Its effect is to prevent any one who has sufficient money to bribe one of the Emir's powerful slaves from being brought to justice . . . and people seeking redress against them find the palace doors closed."[131] Although many British officials exaggerated the "official corruption" perpetrated by royal slave title-holders, the observation that royal slaves used their access to knowledge, and their control of the flow of people and information into and out of the palace, demonstrates that their control of information translated into the control of the means of corruption.[132] Finally, royal

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[128]Staudinger, *Im Herzen der Haussaländer*, II, 69.

[129]They also instituted salaries for Native court officials, and created District Courts each headed by an *Alkali* nominated and responsible to Kano. See NAK SNP 15/3 Acc 393.

[130]NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909.

[131]NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909.

[132]In 1914 royal slaves were still able to used their positions as representatives of the state to extract money and material from the *talakawa*: "Then Maishanu and Idi and Tanko, slaves of our Emir Abbas-they were sent to arrest a thief. They travelled to where he was and arrested him. Along the way they took two shillings from the Galadiman Gwarzo wrongfully. They went to the Mukaddamin Gedi and extorted ten

slaves also had an important role in the disposal of property, which was often given to them by the emir himself, as *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru noted:

> Anybody who was *dan rimi* was more than a slave, all the town belongs to him. Whatever any slaves of the emir wanted he goes to *Dan Rimi* and asks, even if you wanted a house you ask *Dan Rimi*, you ask for the house and if it is available you take it. All the town belonged to *dan rimi*. The whole of Kurmi market belonged to *dan rimi*.[133]

Because each District Head was placed under the *shamaki, dan rimi* or *sallama*, they had the opportunity to control the flow of information to and from the emir.[134] This was, in essence, the control of knowledge. [135] *Dan Rimi* Allah Bar Sarki was also associated with the

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shillings from him. They went to Dansokoto and extorted four from him. Then they went to Dederi and wrongfully took a ram away from Husain." NAK 1/2/1 Native Authority Series, cited by Allan Christelow (ed.), *Thus Ruled Emir Abbas*, 156-157.

[133]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996.

[134]See, for example, interviews with *Jakadan Garko* Alhaji Ado Yahaya, 3 December 1995 and *Dan Madanin* Alhaji Nura Mohammad, 9 March 1998.

[135]This continued during the colonial period, and occurred throughout the Sokoto Caliphate; see Arnett's comments on Sokoto Provincial Report, 10/6/1923 and 13/8/1923, E. J. Arnett Papers, *Rhodes House Library*, Mss. Afr s. 952. According to this report, one slave named Suitali had: "proved a very real stumbling block. Orders and decisions of the Sultan frequently had no effect because they were not correctly conveyed to the proper persons." Suitali had control of the lines of communication i.e. the men who carried the Sultan's messages. Arnett tried to ensure that all business was conducted at "regular" hours with *Waziri* "Machido" present, who was himself appointed to check the power of these slaves by reducing the slaves' control of information. In short, Arnett hoped that the *Waziri* would assume the duties of the *bayin sarki*. In practice, however, the domination of information by royal slaves continued unabated: "If affairs were transacted at irregular hours after the Waziri had left the Fada, the Sultan might give the right order but it would be left to Suitali or one of the head slaves to transmit the order to the messenger. In the same way with returning messengers from the [Districts]. One frequently heard of messengers bringing reports . . . which they delivered through Suitali and the slaves and only garbled versions actually reached the Sultan." For Kano, see NAK SNP 15/3 Acc. 377, Kano Tax Assessment, Kano Report No. 35, 29/12/07 in which the British Resident complains that "it has only been by the constant changing of Dan Rimi's underlings, our interpreters and even my own personal servants that I have been able to at all keep in touch with the headmen and the people." See also Arnett to Hale Middleton,

control of knowledge. After being appointed in 1903/1904, he became the only intermediary between the Residency and the emir. According to some, Abbas initially had a very close, secure relationship with Allah Bar Sarki: "As he had always been in the confidence of the present emir and trusted by him he was appointed messenger to the Resident immediately after occupation."[136] However, this relationship eroded as Allah Bar Sarki began to use his position, and his ability to control and obstruct the flow and content of information, between the Emir, the Residency and the *hakimai.* After months of barely suppressed political crisis and intrigue, Allah Bar Sarki was demoted from the position of *waziri,* and the title was restored to a free-born title-holder.[137] The royal slaves'control of knowledge was facilitated by the presence of their own relations and clients in the Districts outside Kano proper. The most important royal slaves had their own agents in the Districts, and kept abreast of political events, rivalries, the state of the local crops, and the progress of tax collection. Muhammad Bello attempted to further expand his own knowledge about the Districts by assigning his royal slaves to accompany the representatives of the free title-holders during their visits to the territory under their supervision. While royal slave messengers, the *jakadu,* were sent to each district to supervise the actual collection of taxes, and acted as spies for the absentee title-holders in Kano, they did not collect the taxes

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7/11/24, Mss. Afr s. 952 where the *Dan Rimi* in Kano obstructs a series of messages between the Emir of Katsina and the Emir of Kano.

[136]NAK Kanoprof c. 111. He was likely appointed in 1905. See NAK Kanoprof c.111. See also The Brice-Smith Papers, Mss Afr. s. 230, *Rhodes House Library.* Oral data confirms that Abbas and Allah Bar sarki had a close relationship before 1908/09.

[137]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.

themselves.[138] In 1904, the *Annual Report* for Northern Nigeria described the *jakadu* as "The agents, messengers and spies of the emir or Fief-holder."[139] As more villages were established, some *jakadu* expanded their offices by appointing clients to oversee the collection of taxes in these villages or hamlets.[140] Overall, the *jakadu* wielded more authority than the *dagatai*, as they represented the authority of royal slaves who in turn represented the authority of the emir.[141]

In the case of taxation, representatives of both the emir and the *hakimi* travelled to the villages and districts to receive the taxes collected by the village head or *dagaci*. The emir's representative was appointed by one of the leading slaves and was generally taken from their own household. Afterwards, the proceeds were taken by the slave *jakada* to their royal slave patron, who in turn conveyed them to the emir. These slaves could and did extract a portion of this revenue for their own use.[142] They were also held accountable for the assessment of taxation and ensured that the emir's interests were guarded: "For the assessment of other taxes the hakimi sent down his agent

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[138]See C. N. Ubah, 'Islamic Fiscal System and Colonial Innovations: The Kano Example', *Islamic Quarterly*, 23 (1979), 176.

[139]*Northern Nigeria Annual Report*, 1904, 221.

[140]This continued in the early colonial period, despite British attempts to abolish the system: "they have great power with the army of hangers-on, principally slaves, who surround the emir, block progress, and rule many of the village chiefs." NAK SNP 6/4 c.111/1908. See also NAK KANOPROF 4/4 202/1917.

[141]See interview with *Dan Rimi* Muhammadu, 30 December 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also interviews with Muhammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 28 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*, *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 15 December 1995 and 17 June 1996 and *Babban Zagi* Garba, 28 February 1996.

[142]Interview with *Dan Madanin* Alhaji Nura Mohammad, 9 March 1998. See also NAK SNP 15/1 Acc. 289, Dawaki ta Kudu Assessment Report: "Those digatai [village heads] - the majority who were invested by the Emir himself had over them not only the Hakimi but also one of the Emir's principle slaves, through whom they gained access to the Emir after reporting to their hakimi, while certain villages, the tax of which was reserved to the Emir, had only the slave between him and their digatai."

accompanied by the agent of the emir's slave; these worked in concert with the *digachi* and the hamlet head and watched their master's interests; in the case of appeal against assessment the Emir would look to his slave for a report on the circumstances."[143] Often, the *dogarai* stationed in the districts were recruited from the households of one of the three leading slave officials. As late as 1922, Hale Middleton could state that the *dogarai* in the Districts were recruited from the *yara* or followers of the leading slave officials in Kano.[144] One District Officer even complained that the *yara* "of the chief slaves even after being recruited placed allegiance to their masters before that to the commander of the force."[145] This comment is supported by oral testimony which states that when a district head died, his slaves were evacuated to the palace, where the *shamaki, dan rimi,* or *sallama* took custody of them.[146]

Likewise, the senior slaves advised the emir about which slave to appoint as *wakili* for the deceased district head. The *wakili* acted as

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[143]NAK SNP 15/1 Acc. 289, Dawaki ta Kudu Assessment Report. That assessing the level of taxation took skill and specialized knowledge was recognized by the British; see *ibid.*: "To Malam Manzo I am particularly grateful for his unusual knowledge of local conditions, his excellent memory and his unfailing interest in his work."

[144]NAI CSO 26 No. 09560, cited by Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate*, 91.

[145]*Ibid.*

[146]See interview with Mohammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 28 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.* On one occasion, Sarkin Dutse Bello rebelled over a disagreement with Abdullahi Maje Karofi, and was thus brought to Kano, arrested, detained in prison, and later executed. Afterwards, his slaves were brought to the "Fada" or royal court/chambers in Kano. A similar tradition is discussed by Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, "A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period, 1809-1903) (Ph.D., unpublished, Indiana University, 1985), 157. According Dantiye's sources, a *jakadu* reported to Mohammad Bello that *Sarkin Dutse* Irema kept seventy young girls and seventy young men in his household. Irema was summoned to Kano, denied the accusation, and claimed the *jakada* was lying. The Emir's courtiers intervened, and convinced Bello to detain Irema. Although he was eventually exonerated, he lost the title of *sarkin dutse.*

District Head until a new official was appointed.[147] Royal slaves possessed a wider and more varied knowledge about the state of Kano Emirate as a whole than anyone else in the emirate, with the exception perhaps of the emir. The control and possession of knowledge and information about the districts surrounding Kano provided royal slaves with mechanisms to interfere in the daily life of rural Kano; they had influence far beyond the four walls of the palace.[148]

Resident F. Cargill attempted to abolish the *jakadu* and force the free-born *hakimai* to live in the districts they administered, with the intention that they would eventually collect a regular salary.[149] Political life was conducted at the centre, in Kano proper, and the attempt to move the high-ranking nobility to the new "districts" created by the British must have initially seemed highly irregular and troublesome to the governing class in Kano. Tellingly, after the re-organization, Cargill was given the Hausa nickname *mai gunduma*, literally, chief or master of the division, or the cutting and breaking [of the land].[150] If land in Kano was already divided and apportioned between *hakimai*, why was Cargill known as the person who parceled out

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[147]Interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995.

[148]The *jakadu* possessed knowledge about tax collection and the villages under their command that was unrivalled: "the average village head of a small village has neither the authority nor inclination to collect taxes on his own account without the direction and help of his jekeda whose knowledge of different villages has often enabled me to correct false statements made by village-heads." NAK SNP 7/13 3834/1912.

[149]See NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909. See also Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery* and Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate.*

[150]See A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "Nicknames in Northern Nigeria's History" in *West Africa* 14 September 1954, cited in Sir Charles Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1911, second edition, 1965.)

the land? On one level, the nickname simply refers to the fact that portions of certain districts were divided, taken from some title-holders and given to other title-holders. Yet, conceptually, the nickname also refers to the rupture of the personal associations and networks that had linked rural and urban Kano. As the British redistributed land, they severed the social relationships between the city and countryside that had been maintained by the *jakadu* of the royal slaves and *hakimai.* However, these links were not easily broken. The pre-colonial system persisted well into the colonial period because these social relationships and networks continued to function. The knowledge shared by the *jakadu* was still vital; and this knowledge allowed the emir to remain informed about the districts under the control of the resident *hakimai.* Until 1907 the "listing" and "collection" of taxation was still performed by *jakadu* "and the thirty and odd district-heads (so called) had little to do with it."[151] Even after Cargill reduced the number of districts and forced the *hakimai* to be personally responsible for the collection of taxes, it was stated that: "the system laid down has been very little adhered to."[152] In the majority of cases the district head took no interest in local administration, and simply ordered his former *jakadu* to "over-ride" the properly appointed tax-

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[151]NAK SNP 6/4 c. 111/1908.

[152]NAK SNP 6/4 c. 111/1908. See also NAK SNP 7/10 472/1909: "In order to abolish the old Jekadas each district has been sub-divided under sub-district headmen, who are responsible for the taxes, and practically occupy the position of collectors. Where local Sarikis of sufficient importance exist they have been chosen for the posts, but where there is no local Sarki or sufficient influence , a man is nominated by the Hakimi for the post, usually one of his brothers or sons. The Hakimi have further been pressed to get rid of their old following of Jekadas and slaves, and to sell their surplus horses. The Maidaiki's old following have been abolished entirely. I think that if the Emir were pressed to do the same and clear out the old palace clique, matters would progress faster."

collectors. The power and influence of the *jakadu* was further increased because, according to colonial officials, they had "placed an Agent in every village for the collection."[153]

> The whole question of the relation between the District and Central organizations needs careful enquiry before any action is taken. Distinction should be made between those persons who are employed by the Emir for the purposes of his household and those who are employed on official business. It should really be ascertained which of the latter are really necessary for the transaction of public business. It is easy to say that all the satellites must be got rid of, but I think it will probably be found that these much abused satellites are really doing useful work. It must be of great assistance to the Emir to have an intermediary between him and the D. Heads. *He cannot be expected to remember the details of thousands of transactions, and the intermediary with his special knowledge of the Districts and of precedents is useful* [my emphasis].[154]

Thus, the acquisition and control of knowledge was a means to provide resources which could be used in the interests of the entire slave community, and served as a means to resist the directives of the colonial state. Certainly, the royal slave community did not always act to advance a single cause or purpose. However, individuals within households could manipulate the opportunity to acquire knowledge in order to increase their influence in both urban and rural Kano.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the mobilization and use of knowledge in the royal slave community of Kano. Knowledge was a means for royal

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[153]NAK SNP 6/4 c. 111/1908.
[154]NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921.

slaves to transmit cultural capital to their progeny and their clients. Royal slaves took hold of political symbols which defined and legitimated their power. Knowledge was, then, central to the social and political organization of the palace, and to the way in which networks of people formed and disseminated information. My analysis of the use and acquisition of knowledge also sheds important light on land holding, tax collection and the political structure of the Emirate. Personal relationships, through which knowledge was transmitted from rural to urban Kano, were an important element of the institution of royal slavery While I have argued that royal slaves took rational, active steps to secure their political and social goals, they operated within a system that defined them as slaves. The ability to acquire knowledge empowered individuals but as a community the access to this knowledge ensured that their slave status was reaffirmed.

More broadly, slave knowledge encouraged the accumulation of power in the household of the ruler, an important feature of many royal slave systems. The control of knowledge and political discourse facilitated the domination of a variety of social classes and groups, including royal slaves. Perhaps this partially explains the problem which has confounded most of the scholarship on elite slave systems: the discontinuity between slave status and power. Slave status was integral to power and influence because it permitted the acquisition of knowledge. Within the royal slave community, the master-client relationship could be harnessed to build skills among the servants of the state; furthermore, in a *slave* community, this relationship could be

controlled and directed in a manner which would not have been possible among the learned Muslim elite, for instance. Royal slaves seldom acquiesced to the demands of the elite completely. They used the resources offered to them, as slaves, to gain some control of their own social world. They also used their positions to insulate themselves from the legitimate demands of free-born commoners. By virtue of their association with royalty, royal slaves became in one sense more free than the free.

This chapter has demonstrated that the acquisition and transmission of knowledge was institutionalized over the course of the nineteenth century: a royal system evolved from one which had relied on the knowledge possessed by single individuals to an institutionalized, formal mamluk-style system. The means had developed to formally transfer "knowledge" to the wider royal slave community. This community placed significant social and cultural value on the acquisition and transmission of these skills, as demonstrated by the way titles were conceptualized as fields of knowledge, and by the way in which individuals transmitted the cultural capital they had acquired to their progeny and clients, thereby ensuring their continued participation in the Kano mamluk system.

Chapter Five

The Sultan and His Slaves: "*Amana*" and the Crisis of Legitimacy in the Late Nineteenth Century

Ban ni abuta da biri sandata ta kwan bisa
(I will not befriend a monkey and leave my stick aloft, i.e. what is the good of being the king's favourite if I can't get what I want)[1]

Kowa ya yi abuta da biri sandansa ba shi makewa a bisa
(The stick of anyone who is friendly with a monkey does not stick aloft i.e. a king's favourite doesn't get left in the lurch)[2]

Introduction

In 1893, after a reign of ten years, Emir Muhammad Bello died.[3] His death catapulted Kano into a civil war which lasted until Aliyu Babba formally and officially assumed the throne and occupied Kano in 1894-1895. The causes of this conflict originated in 1882, during the succession crisis initiated by *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Maje Karofi's death. As indicated in previous chapters, select individuals in the royal slave community prospered during Abdullahi's reign.[4] Although he executed or deposed a number of important officials, he also gave many of his royal slaves a great deal of latitude and power.[5] This

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[1]C.E.J. Whitting, *Hausa and Fulani Proverbs*, 15.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]The precise length of his reign was ten years and two (or three) months, see *Fayd al-qadir fi awsaf malik al-khatir*, Jos Musuem Library MS no. 52, translated by Ibrahim Halil Sa'id.
[4]See, for example: interviews with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996, Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998 and Wada Dako, 21 February 1998.
[5]This included the execution of *Shamaki* Isa, possibly also known as Ahoda, who was connected with another faction interested in assuming the throne in place of Maje

chapter explores the history of the Kano Civil War, or *Basasa*, in the context of the development of royal slavery in Kano Emirate. Although the history of the *Basasa* has been well covered by others, notably Adamu Fika and M.G. Smith, neither has attempted to reconstruct the histories of the individual royal slaves involved on either side.[6] The Chapter will demonstrate how *amana*, or loyalty, worked in theory and in practice in the royal slave community at a particular time in the history of Kano.

The crisis at the end of the nineteenth century was perhaps the culmination of the political factionalism that had intruded into political life throughout much of the period. It pitted the progeny of Abdullahi against the son of Muhammad Bello and his supporters, including the kin of Emir Usman (r. 1846-1855). Slaves were used both during and after the conflict because they had developed personal relationships of trust and secrecy with their masters. They were used by Aliyu to cement his control of the emirship, and to dispossess free officials from their official positions in government. Symbolically, Aliyu organized and trained an elite body of slave musketeers under a new slave official, the *shettima*, as a means to supplement and safeguard his authority. Thus, as discussed in previous chapters, the features which governed the operation of the royal slave system: the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, the vitality of kinship, the family and

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Karofi. See interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[6]See Adamu Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 1882-1940* and M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano, 1350-1950.*

household, and the importance of trust and personality, all came into play at the end of the nineteenth century during the *Basasa*.

Royal slaves both raised and trained certain members of the royal family. As their mentors, they too had a critical stake in the outcome of the war. Frequently in the past, slaves favoured those emirs with whom they had built solid relationships in their households. The relationship between the *bayin sarki* and the emir was governed by the concept of *amana*.[7] The word *amana* implies a reciprocal trust and a shared understanding between two parties, a sort of mutual loyalty. *Amana* was renewed between the emir and the palace slaves at each accession. Upon installing a new emir in Kano, the *waziri* of Sokoto summoned the senior royal slaves to meet their new master and announced: "This is the man the Caliph has selected to govern Kano. Keep him well and obey him with good faith."[8] This performance was designed to align royal slave interests with the new emir, re-establish the palace hierarchy and in M. G. Smith's words "ordain cohesion."[9] Part of royal slave ideology was based on the concept of *amana*, and royal slaves often acted in accordance with this cultural and social ideal. This is not to argue that all royal slaves acted in accordance with *amana*. They did not. Rather, *amana* was one governing cultural value that informed, defined and ordered the social and cultural world of royal slaves.

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[7]Interviews with *Lifidi* Ahmed Aliyu Daneji, 24 November 1995, *Shamaki* Inuwa, 15 December 1995, *Mabudi* Alhaji Sale, 1 November 1995, Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 17 July 1996. See also M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 293.

[8]In Hausa: 'ga wanda sarkin musulmi ya ba mulkin Kano. Ku rike shi da amana, ku biye umurcinsa.' See Smith, Government *in Kano*, 293.

[9]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 293.

The *amana* or reciprocal trust between slave and emir was never absolute. Nonetheless, the ideal that a slave could be brought close to the ruler as a trustworthy dependent must have had an impact on their use in times of instability or insecurity. As indicated before, *Dan Rimi* Ibrahim Barka was said to have had this kind of relationship with Ibrahim Dabo. According to *Dan Rimi* Nuhu's grandson, Alhaji Abba Sadauki, no one could say anything negative about Ibrahim Dabo in the presence of Barka, nor could anyone demean Barka in the company of Dabo. They knew each other's most intimate secrets.[10] This unique trust was related to the possession of secrets - about family, politics and personal conduct - that was provided to only a select few in the slave community. Although a slave might rise to the position of *shamaki*, for instance, others could be closer to the emir and share secrets which no doubt granted them not just important information and knowledge, but provided them with significant freedom of action. These slaves were said to have been brought close to the emir, or the emir's body [Hausa: "ja su a jika" or "draw them close" to him or his "body"] because they were highly favoured and trusted without question.[11] These relationships were vigorously pursued after 1903, despite the very different political context of colonialism. Members of the royal slave community claim that the royal slaves were exiled in 1925 and 1926 explicitly because the emir relied upon them so completely that it allowed a number of individual slaves to accumulate

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[10]Interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998, Wada Dako, 21 February 1998 and *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998.

[11]Interview with Karibullahi Muhammadu Nasiru Kabara, 29 March 1998. See also interview with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996.

both wealth and power at the expense of free officials.[12] Although thirty-two years had passed since the *Basasa*, the incorporation of royal slaves into the household of the emir had continued unabated. The free members of the regency council (*Madaki* Mahmud, *Waziri* Gidado, and *Sarkin Bai* Abdulkadir[13]) complained to the British that they had no role in the formulation or execution of policy because of Mamman's interference, ability and proximity to the emir. Thus, when the Prince of Wales visited Kano in 1925 and saw a dead body on the road, *Madaki* Mahmud went directly to the British claiming that Mamman was to blame, and should be dismissed and exiled. The British agreed.[14] Although Mahmud's descendants claim he had no role in the dismissal of Mamman, the perception that the councillors and the royal slaves had different interests, and were in conflict, is nonetheless important.[15] It suggests a pattern, which, I argue, was also prevalent in the nineteenth century. It also demonstrates the manner in which royal slaves were brought close to the emir, and how that in turn reflected on their position and influence in the slave hierarchy.

Whereas M.G. Smith places emphasis on the unchanging quality of trust or *amana* between emir and slave, arguing that it encouraged stability and loyalty to the throne (and not simply individuals), slaves

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[12]Interview with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996.

[13]*Galadima* Abdulkadir, the brother of Abdullahi Bayero, was appointed in 1928. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 459 and NAK SNP 17/1 9043 Vol. I and NAK SNP 17/8 K 105, vol. III.

[14]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998, *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996 and *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996. The description of events by colonial officials minimizes the role of Mamman; see John Carrow to E.J. Arnett, 30 April 1925 and Emir's report on the affair of the corpse found in the Kano market, 18/4/25, The Arnett Papers, Mss. Afr. s. 952, Rhodes House Library.

[15]Interviews with *Dan Madanin Kano* Alhaji Nura Ahmad, 9 March 1998 and *Wakilin Gabas* Alhaji Mohammad, 10 March 1998.

also developed close connections with certain *individual* members of the royal household which played a large role in the outcome of the *basasa*. While the concept of *amana* in theory assumed that slaves remained loyal to whomever came into power, in practice the situation was far more complex, as personal loyalties as well as slave family and household connections with each other and the elite, politicised portions of the slave community.

> This relation of amana between the chief and his slaves was critical in facilitating the political centralization of Kano by successive Suleibawa emirs to whom it assured control of a large, loyal and efficiently organised staff at the palace and on royal estates scattered strategically throughout areas. With such resources, the emir enjoyed an unchallenged predominance within the state; and since his slave staff were thus immune to external subversion, he was free to employ them as necessary to overawe the opposition of rival princes, the jihadic aristocracy, or territorial chiefs, or to defend Kano from outside attacks.[16]

Royal slaves were human beings, not simply vessels of loyalty and obligation; while *amana* was indeed a powerful ideological concept and tool, many in the royal slave community had been alienated by Bello's policies. Those who had lost their place in the new system favoured the sons of Abdullahi, with whom they had forged personal ties and bonds between households. It is likewise no surprise that many of the senior slaves remained loyal to Bello. They had been promoted and empowered by him. Following Adamu Fika, Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru claims that Aliyu had overwhelming support from the *cucanawa*, which also needs to be qualified, since many of Bello's most important slave title-holders remained loyal to Tukur because they had household and

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[16]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 293.

personal connections with him and their former patron and master, Muhammad Bello.[17] Rather than interpreting and treating *amana* as an ahistorical concept, and taking for granted the loyalty of the royal slave community, I will explore the manner in which bonds of trust were forged, how they were perceived over time, and the reasons why the royal slave community "divided in two," and what that meant in terms of the history of royal slavery in Kano Emirate.

The Households of Abdullahi Maje Karofi and Mohammad Bello: The Prelude to Civil War

The *Basasa* was a conflict between rival households and the slaves attached to those households. Families divided or were set asunder as ambitious relatives lined up to support the pretender, Yusufu, in order to acquire the titles to which they had claim by right of descent.[18] Titles were sought by lineages, families and households, as *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur noted: "Yes, [I am related to] the present Madaki in terms of lineage. I am his grandfather's junior brother. It is with him we sought the title."[19] This division between families and households reflected the deep division between the households of Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello. The *Basasa* was caused by a dynastic

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[17]Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 62-63. Kwaru does emphasize the importance of royal slave social/political connections to the household of Bello or Abdullahi as a critical factor in the Civil War, but nonetheless argues that the Yusufawa enjoyed nearly complete support from the royal slave community, which was clearly not the case.

[18]A point also emphasized by M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 342-345.

[19]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

dispute within the royal household itself over which among Dabo and Shekara's line would dominate the emirship.[20]

> There was a division in families. Between father and son, mother and child, wife and husband, brother and brother. One sided with this [faction] and this with the other [faction].[21]

Slaves were attached to these households through personal relationships which linked them to their leaders. Thus, the personal slaves of Yusufu and Aliyu were given formal slave titles even before Aliyu officially became emir of Kano. Abdullahi's royal slaves included *Dan Rimi* Salam, Hamza, and Malam or Malam Barka as he was also known, *Shamaki* Ibrahim Mai Gari and (possibly) Ibrahim Mai Yaki, and, *Sallama* Rabo. Smith claims there was a *Sarkin Fada* Malam, the junior brother of Dangyatum, but does not provide the source of his information.[22] While Abdullahi's relations were tumultuous with Salam, he nonetheless managed to keep the support of the slave community. That the entire royal slave community expanded its numbers and influence during the reigns of both Abdullahi and Bello is extensively documented by oral data and the *Kano Chronicle*: "In Abdullahi's time . . . the palace slaves became so great they were like free men."[23] Royal slaves were given a great deal of latitude during

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[20]See interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998, who emphasized that the dispute was a "family' one. Smith also makes this point, see *Government in Kano*, 359-361.

[21]Interview with *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru, 21 August 1996.

[22]See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 327 and interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[23]*The Kano Chronicle*, 131 and interviews with *Dan Iya* Alhaji Yusufu Bayero, 28 June 1996 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996. This has also been extensively documented by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 294-298, Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 34-35, 50-58, Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 59.

Abdullahi's reign in part because he was so often away on military campaign. He gave the *bayin sarki* privileges in order to ensure they would remain loyal to him when he was absent from Kano. Although he was often away on campaign, he took an active role in policy and decision-making.[24] Abdullahi extended his personal, patrimonial control of Kano government along the lines initiated by Ibrahim Dabo. He appointed close kin, sons and his own slaves to important offices. He concluded a series of marriage alliances by giving his daughters to senior officials as wives.[25] He also established marriage alliances with the leading families of Sokoto.[26] Although Fika has taken Muhammad Bello's reign as a significant departure point in terms of his policies of appointments and depositions, in a number of respects he was carrying on the tradition established by his brother, Abdullahi, and father, Ibrahim Dabo. Upon his accession, Abdullahi executed *Shamaki* Ahoda or Isa, shifted the office of *dan rimi* from Barka's line to Salam, a first generation slave, and deposed a number of title-holders and gave their offices to his younger sons, who could not initially challenge Abdullahi for the throne:

> It was also Abd Allah who dismissed Sarkin Dawaki Abdu, and Nakama Gaduda Masu, and Ciroma Dikko and Dan Iya Alabira and Galadima Abd al-Qadir and Galadima Yusuf. He put the qadi Ahmad al-Rufai to death and dismissed Maji Sulayman and Maaji Gajere, and San Kurmi Musa and Malam Dugu and his wazir. No one but God knows how many people Abd Allah dismissed inside the city and in the countryside. Hence he was called Dagi Maganin Wuri Mai Dawri dan Ibrahim . . . One of his innovations was firing guns as he prepared to mount his horse.[27]

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[24]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 284-287.
[25]*Ibid.*, 289.
[26]*Ibid.*, 286-287.
[27]*Kano Chronicle*, MS NAK O/AR10/2, unpublished translation by John Hunwick.

Abdullahi's most important official appointment was to give his son, Yusufu, the title of *galadima.* For a period, Yusufu exercised a significant amount of power and influence; but, after leading a succesful series of campaigns against Ningi, he lost the trust and favour of his father Abdullahi, who kept the government of Kano under his direct control.[28] Smith claims that Yusufu was *Sallama* Barka's "senior charge", and that they had a personal relationship.[29] *Galadima* Yusufu was informed by Barka (probably *Dan Rimi* Salam) about serious disaffection among free Fulani officialdom caused by royal slave marriages to free women. Near the end of Abdullahi's reign, *Sallama* Barka, who held a title reserved for eunuchs, supposedly recovered his potency and seduced a number of Abdullahi's concubines. Given the fact that his life and position would be in danger should this secret be discovered, Barka (Salam) advised Yusufu to draft a letter to Sokoto to ask for Abdullahi's removal due to his physical and mental decline.[30]

> Yusufu . . . became impatient waiting for his long-lived parents demise and began to intrigue against him. He even wrote to the Sultan and said that his father the Emir was senile and should be replaced. Hearing of this, Abdu [Maje Karofi] instantly deposed him and replaced him as Galadima by Ibrahima [sic], a trusty Fulani servitor who had previously been Magatakarda [Maitakarda] and Waziri.[31]

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[28]Smith, *Government in Kano,* 292-293.

[29]*Ibid.*, 293.

[30]*Ibid.*, 296.

[31]HCB 1/11/2, Dawakin Kudu History. See Fika, 20-22. See also Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," who argues Ibrahim wrote the letters in order to engineer Yusufu's dismissal.

Abdullahi eventually discovered the treachery, and had Yusufu degraded, imprisoned and removed from office, likely in 1875 or 1876.[32] According to Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, Yusufu was actually betrayed by the "palace mallams," who, using Yusufu's name, wrote the letters to the Calpih in order to destroy his relationship with Emir Abdullahi.[33] Abdullahi died soon thereafter in 1882. Given the chronology presented in Chapter Two, it is more likely that it was *Dan Rimi* Salam who was involved in the events during the end of Abdullahi's reign. He was not a eunuch, making his relationship with Maje Karofi's concubines more plausible. According to the *Kano Chronicle*, *Sallama* Barka survived into Bello's reign, but was deposed and "degraded" by the Emir because he "revolted."[34] According to other oral data, *Dan Rimi* Salam died or was deposed by Abdullahi, who then appointed Malam Barka to the position. He was later deposed by Bello in favour of Yahaya. It is probable therefore that Malam Barka was the slave who over-reached himself early in the reign of Mohammad Bello, and was thus replaced by Yahaya, his own brother. By the time of Yusufu's dismissal by Abdullahi, *Dan Rimi* Barka was most certainly out of office.

After Abdullahi's death there were three main candidates for the throne: Yusufu, the son of Abdullahi, Mohammad Bello, a brother of Abdullahi, and Dan Lawan Yusufu, also a brother of Abdullahi. The Caliph and *Waziri* at Sokoto could not decide on a candidate. The

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[32]Yusufu was dismissed soon after leading Kano against Ningi in 1875. See Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 61, fn 127.
[33]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.
[34]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 131.

decision was finally made after the daughter of Muhammad Bello, Nana Uwardaji, communicated in a letter that the best choice for the emirship was Bello.[35] When Muhammad Bello came to power, he appointed his own slaves to replace those who had been loyal to Abdullahi and he publicly denounced Yusufu.[36]. He dismissed *Dan Rimi* Malam Barka (who had replaced Salam probably in 1875 or 1876) in favour of his brother, Yahaya. *Shamaki* Ibrahim Mai Yaki (possibly this was Ibrahim Mai Gari) was deposed in favour of Sa'idu, and *Sallama* Rabo was deposed in favour of Mai Yaki.[37] According to the *Kano Chronicle*: "In [Bello's] reign the scholars became very rich, and many persons found favour [including] Sarkin Fada Dan Getuma, Galadima Tukur, Salama Mai Yaki, Mallam Yahaya and others."[38] Thus, there is no mention of Barka, although both Mai Yaki and Yahaya (possibly *Dan Rimi* Yahaya) are given places of prominence. Although it appears to have been common practice for new emirs to promote new slaves into high positions, the royal slave community was much more hostile to Bello, who deprived them of their privileges and some of their power in excess of common practice. The oral traditions about the importance and power of *Sarkin Fada* Dangyatuma indicate that, early in his reign, Bello relied much less on his royal slaves than did Abdullahi. Bello was clearly witness to *Dan Rimi* Salam's machinations with Yusufu, and was known to be hostile toward Malam Barka for his hot temper and

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[35]*Ibid.*
[36]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 301-307.
[37]See Chapter Two. M.G. Smith claims Mohammad Bello had Barka executed. See *ibid.*
[38]The *Kano Chronicle*, MS NAK O/AR10/2, unpublished translation by John Hunwick.

ambition. Even Yahaya, who was appointed by Bello, is said to have suffered under his authority, mainly because Yahaya was himself chafing against Bello's attempts to assert his power at the expense of the royal slave community.[39] According to Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, Yahaya sent a letter to Sokoto complaining that he was being troubled by the Emir.[40] Yahaya was not removed by Bello, but a number of his duties were shifted to other slaves in the hierarchy. According to this tradition, the dispute ended when Bello emerged from his chamber on a rainy day and asked the assembled group of courtiers how many times it had rained. None of the advisors were willing to volunteer an answer except Yayaha, who answered Bello's question. Bello then told Yahaya that he was impressed with his courage, and stated: "I won't trouble you and you won't trouble me."[41] Alhaji Abba Sadauki recalled that Yahaya and Bello were called "Kamar wuta ne day iska" or just like the wind and flame." In essence, Yahaya was remembered as being able to manipulate Bello, as the wind would blow a flame in a certain direction or cause a fire's temperature to increase.[42] According to Alhaji Abba, one day Yahaya and Bello would be close, the next they would be feuding.

The subject of their arguments was likely Bello's policies toward the royal slave community. Muhammad Bello forced the royal slave community to divorce their free-born wives and proclaimed a new law

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[39]Interviews with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29-30 March 1998 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.
[40]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996.
[41]*Ibid.*
[42]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998.

which ensured such marriages would be prevented in the future.[43] This policy was greatly resented by the royal slave community but they had no real choice in the matter. In order to consolidate his own position, Bello had to ensure that Abdullahi's royal slaves were kept in check.[44] According to the *Kano Chronicle*, all of the royal slaves "rebelled" during Muhammad Bello's reign, in the sense that the royal slaves over-reached themselves by attempting to exceed their authority.[45] Royal slaves were certainly the subjects of a purge conducted by Bello, as the *Kano Chronicle* records: "They all rebelled in Muhammad Bello's time, but Allah helped Muhammad Bello quell the rebellion.[46] The "rebellion" was checked by a policy that involved the execution of a number of royal slaves.[47] M.G. Smith takes the position that royal slaves never actually "rebelled," as the Hausa word used in the *Kano Chronicle* is "kangara" [to over-reach] rather than "tawaye" [to rebel]. Nonetheless, as a result of Bello's policies, a number of royal slaves defied his wishes and attempted to subvert his royal authority.[48] Another tradition records that the royal slave community was hostile to Bello because he was a learned malam who prevented the slaves from exercising power in their customary

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[43]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 303: "Bayan wannan, bawa ya aure baiwa, 'yaya ya aure 'yaya ["Henceforth, let slave men marry slave women (only), and free men marry free women." See also NAK O/AR10/2, *Kano Chronicle*: "He intervened in the marrying of his slaves known as Asaku and forbade them to marry free women." Others have discussed these policies, see especially Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule.*

[44]Interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995. This period is well documented by Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 56-57.

[45]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 131 and Smith, *Government in Kano*, 301-307.

[46]Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 131.

[47]*Ibid.* See also Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 57.

[48]Interviews with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 June 1996 and *Jakadan Garko* Ado Yahaya, 3 December 1995.

manner.[49] It is certain that Bello relied on a new cohort of Malams and on his *sarkin fada*, which may have initially curtailed royal slave power.[50] According to palace traditions collected by Husaini Sufi, Bello provided one house, the official residence of the Imams, to Malam Buhari, but when Aliyu came to power he forced both Buhari and Liman Dikko from the house, which he transferred to the *sarkin kakaki* and the *kasheka*, both royal slaves.[51]

Shamaki Sa'idu and *Sallama* Mai Yaki appear to have been less hostile toward Bello, possibly because they could not depend on the same degree of family and household support as could Yahaya, the son of *Dan Rimi* Barka. Despite his rather tenuous relationships with a number of leading royal slaves, after Dangyatuma's death Bello began to rely more closely on his royal slaves, whom he used to supervise the Kano *hakimai* during the collection of taxes.

As suggested above, Bello's relationship with a large portion of the royal slave community was initially strained. The general nature of this relationship is reflected in palace oral traditions about *Sarkin Fada* Dangyatuma. According to these traditions, Bello was politically isolated long before he was made emir in 1882.[52] After he came to

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[49]Interview with *Madaki*, 4 February 1996. See also interview with *Sarkin Tambura* Idris, 20 August 1996. This may also reflect the fact that Bello seems to have relied closely on a number of Mallams at the court, including El Hadj Ahmed el-Fellati.

[50]See El Hadj Ahmed el-Fellati, "Empire de Sokoto" in Lovejoy and Kanya-Forstner (eds.), *Pilgrims, Interpreters and Agents: French Reconnaissance Reports on the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, 1891-1895* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 54. See also *Fayd al-qadir fi awsaf malik al-khatir*: "Emir Bello used to make generous gifts every year to the learned men who lived with him and helped him settle disputes. It is impossible to determine the quantity of clothing, food and money he used to spend on them."

[51]Husaini Sufi, *Mu San Kammu*, 75. The house was located very close to the central mosque, by the place gate called *kofar fatalwa*.

[52]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998. See also Fika, *The Kano*

power, he could not rely on the loyalty of either the slave or free-born title-holders, and he instead promoted a close, but formerly untitled, friend to the position of *sarkin fada* [Hausa: chief of the court or courtiers].[53] Bello is said to have called Dangyatuma into his throne room and told him that because of his loyalty he would he would be free to enter any part of the palace, and he would even be permitted to ride Bello's own horse. Bello's elevation of Dangyatuma was extremely irregular, as he had been given a position of influence and prominence purely on the basis of friendship. According to *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, when Bello first called for Dangyatuma the palace community did not even know who he was: "Duk mutane aka yi mamakin wane ne kuma Dangyatuma. [People began to wonder, 'who was that?' "][54] The *Kano Chronicle* also emphasizes that Dangyatuma was extremely powerful: "He said to his friend Sarkin Fada Dan Gyatum, 'You are Wazirin Kano; I place in your hands the management of Kano.' The Sarkin Fada was unrivalled as a settler of disputes; Bello was like his Waziri, and Sarkin Fada was like Sarki."[55]

Civil War and British Over-Rule, 51 and El Hadj Ahmed el-Fellati, "Empire de Sokoto" in Lovejoy and Kanya-Forstner (eds.), *Pilgrims, Interpreters and Agents: French Reconnaissance Reports on the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, 1891-1895*, 54: "depuis sept ans il s' était presque complètement isolé du monde, vivant dans sa maison avec un seul serviteur, l' Afénaouï Naziahoum [Dan Gyatuma], qui lui préparait sa nourriture et entretenait du feu dans sa chambre quand il faisait froid."

[53]On *sarkin fada*, see M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 99-100: "This term was usually applied to those untitled favourites or upstarts whose influence with the chief seemed to subvert traditional constitutional procedures and authority for policy formation and execution . . . Such unofficial power attracted public notice . . . all executive authority or influence on policy formation or implementation exercised by untitled persons was unconstitutional and subversive."

[54]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

[55]Palmer, 132. See also Fika, 51. According to Alhaji Abubukar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995, Dangyatuma was not a competent official because he never held a slave title, and was thus not properly trained.

While royal slaves could be elevated at least partially on the basis of their relationship with the emir, they nonetheless held formal slave titles which governed their positions and functions. They were also slaves and could not use their favoured positions to usurp the emirship. The same could not be said of Dangyatuma, who had displaced both the slave and freeborn aristocracy.[56] Formerly, only select royal slaves would have had personal access to the emir. Likewise, Dangyatuma displaced the *bayin sarki* from their favoured positions as informal advisors.[57] When one visitor came to the palace from Zazzau, he did not go through one of the royal slaves to receive an audience with the Emir, but through Dangyatuma. This displacement is also reflected by the palace royal slave tradition that Dangyatuma effectively replaced the *shamaki*.[58] Dangyatuma's reign came to an end after he gave Bello's favourite concubine to a visitor without the Emir's permission. After this outrage, the *bayin sarki* are said to have killed him, although whether they were acting on Bello's orders is unclear.[59] More importantly, the tradition indicates that the *bayin sarki* were hostile because Dangyatuma usurped their positions as personal advisors to the Emir, and interfered with the Emir's concubines, the social and political terrain of the royal slave community.

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[56]Interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995. This point is also emphasized by Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 52.

[57]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

[58]*Ibid.* Dangyatuma was even allowed into Emir's private rooms, a rare privilege usually reserved only for eunuchs. Dangyatuma is remembered by some royal slaves as a royal slave himself. See interview with *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998. This is probably inaccurate, and reflects an attempt by the current royal slave community to claim Dangyatuma as one of their own.

[59]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998.

In addition to dismissing most of Abdullahi's slaves, Bello also dismissed many of Abdullahi's own nephews and sons from office: "During his reign Bello treated all the relations of Abdu with great severity, persecuting them by taking away their offices, their horses and even their wives."[60] Abdullahi's sons were very numerous, and they had expected to be given the emirship. Bello, however, favoured his own sons to the exclusion of Abdullahi's own issue. In 1882 Bello deposed *Galadima* Ibrahim, whom Abdullahi appointed to replace Yusufu, with his own son, Muhammad Tukur.[61] He granted the office of *galadima* a large number of new estates and districts to administer, effectively bolstering the power of Tukur.[62] In addition, Tukur's brothers administered extensive territories in their capacity as *ciroma*, *sarkin shanu* and *dan buram*.[63] The supervision of territory was also reallocated from Abdullahi's sons to a number of Bello's slaves, as we see from a letter written by Aliyu Babba (a son of Abdullahi whose mother was the daughter of Caliph Aliyu Babba):

> when we had returned home we gave our emir (Mamman Bello) the tax he had levied on us by his slave Makama Dandaura, who is well known. He (Mamman Bello) said that he had placed him in charge of these matters and that if any others interfered (?or collaborated) with him he should report this. He (Dandaura) said nobody had interfered (?or collaborated) with him at all, so I told him to depart.[64]

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[60]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 66.

[61]HCB 1/11/2, Dawakin Kudu History, see in general Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule.*

[62]These territories included: Gwaram, Dutse, Rano, Jahun, Fogolawa, Yelwa, 'Yargaza, Minjibir, Tamburawa, Kumbotso, Jigawa, Kacako, Kanya Babba, Dawakin Kudu, Tudun Wada, Riruwe, Burdo, Kiri, Miga, Gadan Sarki, Makori, Harbai, Dan Gyatum, Gammo and possibly Ringim, Buga, Kiyawa, Taura, Gujingu and Majiya. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 327.

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]Aliyu to Muhammadu Mansura, cited by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 308. Fika, *The*

Abdullahi Mahadi has also argued that Bello initiated large-scale land confiscation in the Kano close settled zone to reward his own followers and to increase his own revenue.[65] Although Bello's relationship with the North African merchant community was strained because he refused to give them his daughters in marriage, he developed close relationships with the Agalawa merchant community in Kano city. The Agalawa were the beneficiaries of his policy of confiscation, and they developed large slave estates on the land they received.[66] As mentioned above, between 1886-1890 Bello also appointed slave representatives to accompany the *jakadu* of free Kano officialdom when they travelled to the Districts where they supervised the collection of taxes.[67] To combat cowrie inflation, Bello doubled taxes.[68] Overall, for political support, Bello turned not just to his sons, but also to a different cadre of royal slaves and Malams, and the Agalawa merchants of Kano. Along with *Dan Rimi* Yahaya, Bello depended on *Shamaki* Sa'idu, and *Sallama* Mai Yaki.[69] The most influential free-born official was the heir apparent, *Galadima* Tukur.

Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 52, notes that Sokoto intervened to ensure Aliyu was not deprived of the town Garun Babba.

[65]Mahadi, "The State and Economy," 459-460. See also NAK SNP 7 1055/1912 and NAK SNP 15/3, Palmer on Land Tenure in the Hausa States, as cited by Mahadi. "The State and the Economy."

[66]See A.U. Dan Asabe, "Comparative Biographies of Selected Leaders of the Commercial Establishment" (M.A., unpublished, Bayero University Kano, 1987) and Mahadi, "The State and the Economy," 459-460.

[67]Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 54-55.

[68]See NAK SNP 7/10 3635/1909 and Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, "A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809-1903)" (Ph.D., unpublished, Indiana University, 1985), 159.

[69]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998. See also East, *Labarun Hausawa*, II, 65-66.

The Basasa and Sarkin Kano Aliyu Babba

The progeny and clients of Abdullahi endured ten years of Bello's reign, and expected that Yusufu would be given the emirship when Bello died.[70] The locus of support for the Yusufawa was amongst those relatives of Abdullahi who had been disenfranchised by Bello:

> Yusufu their head had patience however because he hoped to became [sic] S. Kano. The Waziri of Sokoto was at Kano when Bello died. He was not in favour of either Yusufu or Tukur but of a son called Abubakr (Dan Isa). However, to make peace he recommended Yusufu should be made Emir. Abdurahman S. Muslimi however insisted on appointing Tukur.[71]

The opposition to Bello coalesced around Yusufu and erupted into civil war when Bello's own son, Tukur, was nominated to succeed him after his death on 25 March 1893: "[Tukur became Emir] in the face of bitter opposition from the deposed Yusufu and the whole of that numerous branch of the family."[72] As indicated above, *Wazirin Sokoto* Buhari was visiting Kano when Bello died, and Caliph Abdul-Rahaman gave orders to Waziri Buhari to appoint Tukur against the wishes of the majority in Kano.[73] He had also been acting in the place of his father,

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[70]Interview with *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996.

[71]Paul E. Lovejoy, Abdullahi Mahadi and Mansur Ibrahim Mukhtar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 66.

[72]HCB 1/11/2 Dawakin Kudu History. See also interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996: "[the Yusufawa won] because the slaves (bayin sarki) and the Kano people preferred the sons of Abdullahi."

[73]See M. Junaidu, *Tarihin Fulani* (Zaria: NNPC, 1965), 48 and Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 60. See also interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998, who claims that Tukur was promised the emirship because of his success in prosecuting the war against Argungu for the Caliph. According to the author of the *Fayd Al-Qadir*, *Waziri* Buhari had promised Yusufu the throne, but was

who had been blind for the four years leading up to his death. Tukur was turbaned on 29 December 1893, but without a public ceremony to mark his installation.[74] The author of the *Fayd al-Qadir* claims that Buhari summoned the state slaves and announced the Caliph's decision to appoint Tukur, but did not summon the Emir's officials:

> such as the Madawaki Malam Dan Iya, and the Makama. When they heard about this, they rushed to pay allegiance, though their hearts were against it. The wazir then wrote letter to the other emirs, like Zaria, Katsina and "Ghudri" all the while weeping and saying that this appointment would not endure.[75]

As others have shown, the disgruntled officials who supported Yusufu refused to pay homage[76] and decided to leave Kano city for Takai. One of Abdullahi's sons, *Wombai* Shehu did try to pay homage to Tukur, but he was mocked by a number of the royal slaves who yelled: "Five men defeated one-hundred" or the five sons of Muhammad Bello defeated Abdullahi's progeny.[77] This may have been a deliberate attempt by the *bayin sarki* to provoke the sons of Abdullahi into action against the unpopular Tukur.[78] Afterwards, Shehu left for Yusufu, from whom he had been estranged since the death of their father, and

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over-ruled by Abdul-Rahaman. Afterwards, Buhari actively undermined Tukur's authority. See also M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 337, 339, Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari*, 61 and Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 58-59.

[74]Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 60.

[75]*Fayd Al-Qadir Li-Aswaf Al-Malik Al-Khatir*, translated by John Hunwick. Edgar records a different tradition. He claims Buhari did consult the princes, who begged Buhari not to appoint Tukur. F. Edgar, *Litafin Tatsuniyoyi Na Hausa* (Belfast: Mayne and Co., 1913), I, 187-191, cited by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 340.

[76]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 341-342 and Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 61-63. See also interview with *Waziri* Usman, 12 August 1996.

[77]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 341, East, *Labarun Hausawa*, II, 66 and interview with Magajin Mallam, 10 July 1996.

[78]Interview with Magajin Mallam, 10 July 1996.

accompanied him to Takai. Takai was one of Yusufu's strongholds, which was administered by *Jakadan Garko* Mai Nasara, who had fought beside Yusufu against Ningi.[79] During the reign of his father, Yusufu had re-established the royal farms, *ribat* and residence at Takai, which then became "the base of operations for Kano forces against Ningi."[80] Yusufu had significant material and human resources in Takai, including slaves, horses and farms.[81] Malam Umaru Sarkin Gida, who came from Takai, claims that it was first settled by Yusufu and his followers during the *basasa*.[82] Yusufu founded two slave settlements in Takai, one at *kofar gabas* [eastern gate] and the second in the southern part of the town, at Wurayfi.[83] On Yusufu's withdrawal to Takai, Sa'id notes that "Dan Rimi Salam" suggested he [Tukur] allow them to leave.[84] This must have been actually been Yahaya, and may have been an attempt by Yahaya to subvert the Tukurawa cause.[85]

The royal slaves who remained loyal to Tukur included: *Shamaki* Sa'idu, *Sallama* Mai Yaki, the *Sarkin Hatsi* and *Dan Rimi* Yahaya. Yahaya, however, appears to have been unwilling to offer his absolute support to Tukur. He therefore advised his junior brother, Nuhu, to follow Yusuf. Thus, *Dan Rimi* Nuhu and *Dan Rimi* Yahaya attempted to

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[79]See NAK SNP 9/11 603/1924.

[80]John Edward Philips, "Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate: Selected Studies, 1804-1903" (Ph.D., unpublished, UCLA, 1992), 328, citing HCB Acc 117, SNP 9 603/1924 and interview with Alhaji Zakarai, 23 March 1990.

[81]*Ibid.*

[82]Interview with Malam Umaru Sarkin Gida, 1/2/1976, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[83]Interview with Malam Umaru Sarkin Gida, 1/2/1976, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[84]Halil Ibrahim Sa'id, "Revolution and Reaction," 246.

[85]According to M. Adamu Muhammad, the Buhari ordered Tukur to stay in the palace and wait for support from Sokoto. See M. Adamu Muhammad, *Ta'rikh Kano*, cited by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 388. Paul E. Lovejoy suggests that Tukur was following the advice of al-Fellati.

secure their family's control of their titles and positions in the slave hierarchy by deliberately choosing opposite sides, which ensured that one of them would retain the title after the war ended. Their house would thus be preserved from the "pillaging" and the confiscation of property that occurred during and after the war.[86]

> [Muhammad Bello died] at the palace and was buried there. The vizier of Sokoto being then in the city, Bello's horse and sword were sent to [caliph Abdu at] Sokoto. A message was sent to the Sultan to say that Yusufu should be appointed, otherwise blood would flow in Kano. But the Sultan replied that Tukur should be appointed, even though intestines flowed, let alone blood. The vizier of Sokoto [Muhammad Buhari] then summoned Dan Rimi Yahaya and [Shamaki] Sa'idu, Malam [Sallama?] Mayaki and Galadima Tukur, and consulted with them, saying, "Who should be appointed to succeed? Tukur or Yusufu?" Shamaki Sa'idu said, "Whoever is appointed from among Dabo's grandchildren, it is the same to us." Dan Rimi Yahaya said it should be Yusufu; and after listening to their speech, the Waziri said "The Sultan has said that Tukur should be appointed."[87]

How were new emirs generally chosen in Kano? In the nineteenth century, a council which consisted of the non-royal lineages: *madaki, makama, sarkin bai, sarkin dawaki mai tuta* consulted with the leading royal slaves about the possible candidates to the throne. Brothers, uncles and sons of the ruler were generally eligible; but, since Dabo, only sons had succeeded to the throne (Usman, Abdullahi and Bello). After Sulaiman, the emirship passed into the hands of the Sullebawa lineage, which effectively became the royal house. After consulting the slaves, the "electors" communicated their choice to Sokoto, where

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[86]Interviews with *Sarkin Shanu* Mohammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996 and *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 29 March 1998. This point is also made by Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 64.

[87]East, *Labarun Hausawa*, II, 66, cited by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 339.

the final decision rested. Age and ability were taken into consideration.[88] According to Imam Imoru, who was in Kano when Maje Karofi died:

> In Hausaland, when the ruler dies, he has many sons who want to succeed him: his sons and his younger brothers all want to assume the Kingship. That is why I said there is no fixed principle for succession to Kingship: nobody assumes the office except the person whom it is given.[89]

Clearly, however, lineage affiliation and kinship ties with the electoral council and slaves had a profound impact on the appointment of a new emir. Individuals made bids for power by establishing connections with slaves and their households, as well as with free officials and powerful palace concubines. The role of royal slaves was especially important, because they were responsible for the care of the former emir's body and burial; they often knew of his death before other officials. According to Imoru, after an emir's death all the officials appointed by him lost their authority until a new emir was appointed.[90] Royal slaves must have had a dominant role to play in this period. Likewise, royal slaves played an important advisory role in the selection process. They were consulted by the electoral council in order to ensure they would support the new emir. The consultation was also intended to guarantee that the proper emir was chosen.

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[88]Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 30 and Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari*, 49. See also Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* and John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 221. Qualifications were also discussed in the *jihadist* literature. See Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya al-hukkam*, Mohammad Bello, *Ifadat al-ikhwan*

[89]Douglas Edwin Ferguson, "Nineteenth Century Hausaland," 225.

[90]*Ibid.*

Royal slaves provided information about the candidate's personal qualities, as well as their judgement about the suitability and political ability of the candidate's mother.

Along with Nuhu, Jatau, Harisu, *Jakadan Garko* Mai Nasara,[91] *Galadiman Fanisau* and *Galadiman Rumbu* Allah Bar Sarki followed Yusuf to Takai.[92] The son of Allah Bar Sarki stated: "My father was here at the end of the rule of Abdullahi Maje Karofi . . . he was at the peak of strength during the time of *Sarkin Kano* Bello; he participated in everything in the palace."[93] Nuhu was said to have been a central advisor to Yusufu, and actively recruited members of the royal slave community into service.[94]

> Shamaki Sa'idu was here. Dan Rimi Yahaya was here. He didn't go to Takai. But his brother, he was the head of the Takai people. He was Nuhu. It was Dan Rimi Nuhu who was the leader of the Takai people. Anyone who wanted to go to Takai was enlisted into the rebel party by Dan Rimi Nuhu.[95]

The decision to side with Yusufu was to a large degree determined by which household they were associated with. Allah Bar Sarki, the *Galadiman Rumbu* under Bello, nonetheless had close ties to Abdullahi, as did Jatau. Thus, royal slave *amana* was not absolute; those who felt

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[91]According to the current *Jakadan Garko*, the title was first created by Maje Karofi who appointed Dan Kano to the position. Dan Kano was followed by his son, Lira, then Dan Kumatu, then Mai Nasara, then Muhammadu, the grandson of *shettiman kano*, then the current *Jakadan Garko*. See interview with *Jakadan Garko* Ado Yahaya, 3 December 1995. However, the exact chronology as recounted by Ado Yahaya is likely to be in error, as he claims Mai Nasara was the *jakadan garko* of Emir Usman, 1919-1925.

[92]Interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995.

[93]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996.

[94]*Ibid.*

[95]*Ibid.*

they had been wronged by Bello, or who had ties to the progeny and household of Abdullahi, sided with Yusufu. The *Basasa* challenged royal slave *amana* and resulted in the politicization of much of the royal slave community. *Amana* was dynamic, and the history of the *Basasa* demonstrates that an individual's *amana* could shift and change over time. The crisis also reveals the continued development of royal slave households; indeed, the royal slave *community* had become an important factor in emirate politics, especially with regard to the choice of a new successor. The royal slave community, not simply individuals, chose sides. Entire slave households, and factions within households, chose sides and mobilised the support of a large number of clients and followers. This proved to be a significant factor in the outcome of the Civil War. After Yusufu left for Takai, Nuhu is said to have come and joined him, bringing the support of a portion of the royal slave community:

> *Dan Rimi* Nuhu came on horseback to Yusufu's camp [at Takai] and met Yusufu seated, together with other people. Yusufu saw a man on horseback and said "our trip is successful. Our trip is successful since Nuhu has joined us, he has joinded our camp." With the arrival of Nuhu he [Nuhu] asked "what is being done, who is the *sarki* here?" The reply he got was "there is none." Then he [Nuhu] said "Yusufu ascend to the throne you are the *sarki*." Then they said "but we didn't come along with the ostrich shoes and the knife and the sword." He [Nuhu] said "I have come along with them. Put them on Yusufu." Then a new *sarki* was enthroned.[96]

Nuhu was thus associated with the royal regalia, and the legitimation of the Yusufawa cause. Indeed, when the assembled

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[96]Interview with *Wakilin Panshekera* Alhaji Abba Sadauki, 30 March 1998.

crowd said that there was no royal trumpet to be blown announcing Yusufu's succession, Nuhu looked to his following, composed of the households of slave and free officials, and stated: "Where is *Sarkin Kakaki*?" The son of *Sarkin Kakaki* then brought out a *kakaki* [trumpet] and blew it, but, it failed to produced any sound. According to Alhaji Abba Sadauki, *Dan Rimi* Nuhu then "brought out his Arabic books, he took out a paper, wrote some sentences, and tied it on the *kakaki*. According to traditions, when the *kakaki* was being blown, it could be heard from afar up to the sea."[97] In effect, the *Yusufawa* constructed a rival royal household in Takai, based on ties of loyalty and obligation to Yusufu's own person and household.[98]

However, the importance of *amana* as an ideal is no better expressed than by the comments of the current *Dan Rimi*. Although his father followed the Yusufawa, Abdulkadir was unwilling to sanction their withdrawal because it contravened accepted notions of *amana*. He therefore stated that: "only the fools left the city to follow the pretender. And it was those fools who eventually won. In the end the fools won . . . it was God that gave them luck."[99] Nonetheless, some royal slave families attempted to reduce the damage inflicted upon their houses by ensuring that they had supporters among both factions. Nuhu and Yahaya shared the same father (Ibrahim Barka) and the same mother. In order to make sure that the title stayed in

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[97]*Ibid.*

[98]For a comparative examples, see Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) and Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus.*

[99]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996.

the house, junior brothers were sent by their senior brothers to the other side. Thus, their control of the title would be preserved. However, junior brothers often left their houses without permission in order to challenge their senior brothers for the title.[100] This pattern was similar among the free officials as well, which M.G. Smith calls "mobilization by segmentation."[101]

> Yes, they were divided into two. Some were here and some were there. Some left for Takai, others remained with the Emir. It was those who went to Takai who finally emerged as the winners and finally returned to the palace.[102]

Oral accounts collected in the palace by *Alkali* Husaini Sufi reflect this typical pattern. According to Husaini Sufi, *Kilishi* Ibrahim survived until Aliyu came to power, when he was deposed for siding with Tukur. Ibrahim was the son of Jibrin, and is said to have been the first *kilishi* appointed in the nineteenth century, and thus had been in power since the time of Dabo.[103] Aliyu deposed Ibrahim and appointed Aliyu, his namesake, to the position.[104] Aliyu was, however,

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[100]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998. This could result in the elimination of certain titles. Some titles were not as important during the colonial period because they were associated with military duties which had been curtailed by the British. Although the *shettima* certainly had fewer duties to perform after the conquest, the family remained important in the palace, and people currently living in the *gidan sarki* attribute the disappearance of the title to a conflict between family members in the house of *shettima*. See interviews with *Sarkin Zage* Mohammad Bashir, 13 August 1996 and *Kilishi* Mohammad Nasiru, 29 February 1996 and 2 August 1996.and Alhaji Mohammad, 11 February 1996, the son of *Shettima* Yakubu.

[101]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 342. Fika, in contrast, takes the unlikely position that the division in families was without rancour or hostility. See Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 64.

[102]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 June 1996.

[103]This is unlikely to be precisely true, given the fact that *kilishi* was not made a slave title until after the reign of Abdullahi Maje Karofi.

[104]According to Smith, Aliyu was the first slave to hold this office, see Smith, *Government in Kano*, 369-370.

a servant in the house of Ibrahim ["baran gidan kilishi din ne"].[105] This suggests that, as with Yahaya and Nuhu, Aliyu appointed slave officials from within the households of Tukur's former slaves. Ibrahim was ejected from *gidan kilishi* [Hausa: the house of *kilishi*], but was given a different house in Madungurun ward. Aliyu was killed in a battle against Damagaram and was replaced by another Ibrahim, who was later deposed by Abbas and replaced by Sani, the son of the Ibrahim deposed by Aliyu, and had his house restored to him.

The emir applied the concept of *amana* to individuals and not simply to the institution. Although current palace tradition maintains that an emir could not send his royal slaves away, in practice, slaves were often deposed when a new emir came to the throne or when they committed a serious offense. *Sallama* Dako stated that the emir would punish a slave by sending him away from the palace: "He will be ejected and transferred to the farm settlement. He will be tagged as redundant and taken to the farm."[106] This was a terrible fate for a senior slave, who was accustomed to fine clothing, plentiful food and access to influence and honour in the palace. Likewise, according to oral testimony, Aliyu promoted Allah Bar Sarki to the position of *Sarkin Hatsi* because Allah Bar Sarki was especially close to Abbas, the brother of Aliyu and son of Maje Karofi. Nuhu and Abbas were enemies throughout much of Aliyu's reign. Abbas felt slighted by Nuhu, who did not accord him the respect he thought he deserved as a royal prince. When Abbas was appointed emir in 1903, he dismissed

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[105]Alkali Husaini Sufi, *Mu San Kammu*, 96.
[106]Interview with *Sallama* Dako, 20 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*.

Nuhu and replaced him with Allah Bar Sarki.[107] Although this tradition is important, as it indicates the mutability of *amana*, it also reflects an unwillingness to ascribe Nuhu's demotion to British pressure after the conquest. Nuhu was formally deposed because the British demanded that participants in the Battle of Kotorkwoshi be removed from office.[108] Finally, in one court case Emir Abbas banished a royal slave named Ayyub for raping a seven year old girl. While he did not execute the slave, by banishing him from the palace Abbas with one stroke destroyed his position and influence: "Then (the emir) said to him: 'If I see you at the gate of my palace, the Kuwaru (Ponies') Gate, or any other gate, I'll have you locked up."[109]

After Yusufu gathered his forces at Takai, the conflict raged throughout the Kano countryside. Yusufu tried to capture Kano but was unsuccessful. He did capture a number of important towns and enslaved a large number of Tukur's own supporters as a result. Yusufu then became ill and died at Garko in 1894 . Yusufu's decision to appoint Aliyu, his youngest brother, was guaranteed and secured by Yusufu's royal slaves. Aliyu was chosen because he had kinship ties to the Caliph,[110] which would thus prevent an complete and absolute political rupture between Sokoto and Kano, possibly safeguarding Kano

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[107]Interview with Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 9 March 1998.

[108]Likewise, during the reign of *Sarkin Kano* Sanusi, *Shamaki* Inuwa was became very influential because he came with Abdullahi Bayero from Bichi, and his father was the Emir's personal slave. Interview with Alhaji Aliyu Waziri, 27 February 1996.

[109]Allan Christelow (ed.), *Thus Ruled Emir Abbas*, 178. If the Emir's female slaves offended him, he would send them to a slave broker or dealer, named Abba Kusu, who sent them south accompanied by a servant to be sold where "nothing would be heard of them."

[110]Aliyu's mother, Saudatu, was the daughter of Caliph Aliyu Babba (reign: 1842-1859).

from a military strike by the Caliph.[111] It is also possible Aliyu was chosen because he could secure the support of the royal slaves who had left Kano to follow Yusufu. Yusufu asked his royal slaves, most especially Nuhu and Harisu, to ensure his brothers paid homage to Aliyu. As demonstrated above, royal slaves were an extremely important source of support during and after this conflict. Those who were loyal to Aliyu could be used to counter the power of hostile free-born title-holders after the conflict ended. On his deathbed, the leader of the rebellious faction, Yusufu, commanded his slaves, *Shamaki* Harisu and *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, to ensure that Aliyu would be made Emir:

> Well, when Yusufu left Takai and arrived at Garko, he felt sick. And Aliyu was the youngest among them. In other words he was not holding any title. His job was to clean their slates [*alluna*, for Islamic writing]. While he was there sick, he said that he probably was going to die. Therefore, he left a message and said you see this boy, you should better make him succeed me (to be the emir) when I die. That is how it should be if you win this war. If not the Caliph would want to come and kill all of the traditional rulers . . . as for Aliyu, his mother is the daughter of the Caliph.[112]

According to Alhaji Aliyu Waziri, *Dan Rimi* Nuhu appointed Aliyu himself: "*Dan Rimi* Nuhu is the one who appointed Aliyu, after the death of Yusufu, the Emir [Aliyu] was in Gaya. He [Nuhu] brought him [Aliyu] to Garko and during the night he brought the Emir Aliyu and

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[111]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996. Smith also argues that his appointment was designed to gain the support of the Toronkawa Fulani, who were angry at Caliph Abdu-Rahaman. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 349.

[112]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Mohammadu, 7 June 1996. See also interview with Alhaji Abubakar Soron Dinki, 15 November 1995.

turbaned him as the Emir, and he allowed the princes to follow him."[113] Likewise, according to *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, it was Aliyu's royal slaves who "pushed him" to the throne. They told Aliyu that they had decided to make him emir, and that if he wished to be appointed he had to swear he would make them powerful:

> The other one said: "You have taken an oath that when you become the emir, you would not make anyone the shamaki except me." He was Harisu. Because of this reason you can see why these two were very important. They made their own emir and brought him to Kano.[114]

According to these traditions, the details of which vary from person to person, the slaves placed Aliyu on the throne, called his brothers and followers into the room, and told each one to bow down and pay homage to the new emir of Kano.[115] Although they were unable to remove Muhammad Bello from the throne, or secure the official succession of their own candidate, when given the opportunity by Bello's death those Kano *mamluks* bound to Yusufu by ties of *amana* placed an emir on throne who was bound to redress their grievances about the policies of the two previous emirs. The *mamluks* could not seize the throne for themselves, but, as was the case in many other times and places where *mamluks* were used, they installed a ruler who was known to favour certain members of the royal slave community.

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[113]Interview with Alhaji Aliyu Waziri, 27 February 1996. Fika argues that it was Aliyu who took control of the situation, and was nominated according to tradition by the proper electors. This is likely to be the "official" Yusufawa version of events, although Fika does takes note of the role of royal slaves played in ensuring Aliyu's brothers paid homage to the new emir. See Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule.* 71-72.

[114]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 7 June 1996.

[115]For example, see interviews with Mallam Umaru Sarkin Gida, 1/2/1976, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection* and *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998.

> After they had done that, at night, they buried Yusufu by the light of lamps, prepared his shroud, finished it and interred him. And they brought Alu and made him sit there, and put on him the burnus and turban. The most important slaves of the Emir and the most important people of the Emir's household, each one came up to greet the Emir. Each one was told to approach and make his greeting - to Alu. Homage. And so it was. Each man who came would say "May God help you", "May God preserve you", "Allah etc. etc.", and those standing there would say, 'You are greeted.' But then, when they got home - "But -! Where was Yusufu!" "He's dead." So that's how Aliyu became ruler-all on his own.[116]

Smith notes that Nuhu and Harisu presented Aliyu with the royal insignia, double-pronged spear and ostrich feather sandals, after seating him on the royal dais.[117] While it is clear that Aliyu had a broad base of support, and had been the choice of Yusufu, he relied on his royal slaves to secure his position and to control those persons who might have been wavering. It was for this reason that he rewarded both Nuhu and Harisu after the conquest of Kano. He granted his slaves more land and houses, and promoted some personal slaves to titled positions. Likewise, it was only after the Civil War that two royal slaves, the *jakadan garko* and *galadiman fanisau*, were awarded a seat on the *majalisa sarki* (state executive council) as a reward for their individual services, loyalty and bravery.[118] The current *Sarkin Shanu*, Mohammadu Mansur, suggested that the royal slaves who remained in Kano also be given a role in Aliyu's success. While

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[116]Interview with Malam Mahmudu, Hausa Poet, unpublished translation by Neil Skinner, 7-8.

[117]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 350. Smith does not, however, mention where these symbols were obtained. They may have been smuggled out of Kano with the connivance of *Dan Rimi* Yahaya and taken to the Yusufawa by Nuhu, as discussed above.

[118]In contrast to Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 34.

this description is unlikely, the depiction of the royal slaves, and the perception that they opened the palace for Aliyu, is valuable. It indicates that, metaphorically, a large portion of the royal slave community favoured Yusufu, and that this support enabled him to take possession of the palace:

> with dundurusu [small axes], and other staff, they [the Yusufawa] kept striking the city wall with the tools. The city gate was closed at that time. But they continued digging into the wall until they passed a place called gwalalo [a ditch]. The Emir entered the city from there. From that wall you can see the Emir's house gate. Then they passed through that entrance and entered the Emir's house. Well, the bayin sarki favoured the house of the emir Abdullahi. The slaves then opened the gate for them [Aliyu and his followers] from the south. The Emir did not take any notice of them . . . He went deep into the Emir's house just near that Emir's house market on the way to Marafa. From there, he then turned and headed to Fatalwa gate. They opened the door for him. The Emir did not take any notice of them. Then he entered between the Emir's house and the Jumma'a mosque near Kwaru. He waited there. As for Tukur he used to be there, then the bayin sarki came out and said to him, "enter your house." Then he headed north via the city market and left. Aliyu entered the house. It took three days.[119]

After Aliyu occupied Kano on 12 September 1894, he consolidated his place on the throne by appointing his supporters to positions of power. Slaves were used by both the Yusufawa and the Tukurawa to shore up their political support. In an environment where loyalties and families were profoundly divided, the power of *amana* was no doubt a large factor in Yusufu and Aliyu's reliance on individual royal slaves for political support, but, in this case it was the vitality of the individual relationships forged in childhood and during the reigns of

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[119]Interview with *Sarkin Shanu* Muhammadu Mansur, 6 June 1996. This description probably conflates Yusufu's first attack on Kano with Aliyu's final, and successful, attack.

either Maje Karofi or Bello that determined which slaves supported Tukur or Yusufu.

> Well, the *Basasa* was just a conflict between two families and after some time the conflict is settled and whoever is together with the emir the emir will keep him. So my grandfather was together with the emir.[120]

Aliyu distributed free titles to his supporters, kin and clients. Kwairanga was made *madaki*, Ahmadu was appointed *waziri*, Shehu was given the office of *galadima*, Isyaku became *wombai*, Abbas was made the *sarkin dawaki mai tuta*, Mamadu was promoted to *ciroma*, and Malam Gajere was made *dan iya*.[121] Nuhu, Harisu and Barde officially replaced Yahaya, Sa'idu and Mai Yaki. Jatau soon replaced Barde after his death. Likewise, Shekarau was made *shettima* and Allah Bar Sarki was given the position of *sarkin hatsi*.[122] Shekarau had commanded the slave gunmen who used the new guns and ammunition obtained from Nupe with such devastating effect.[123] The former *Sarkin Hatsi* had been pro-Tukur because of his close relationship with Muhammad Bello and therefore Aliyu dismissed him.[124] He also installed Dankwari, a slave, as *sarkin shanu* to replace Tukur's own brother, Dati. A number of the former slaves suffered greatly under the new regime,

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[120]Interview with Alhaji Mohammad, 11 February 1996.

[121]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 353. Kwairanga was a supporter from the Fulani Yolawa, Mallam Gajere was a supporter from the Fulani Sullebawa, Ahmadu, Shehu, Isyaku, Abbas and Mamadu were all the brothers of Aliyu.

[122]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 349-353.

[123]*Ibid.* See Chapter Four.

[124]Ibrahim Aliyu Kwaru, "Waziri Allah Bar Sarki," 50-51. According to Kwaru, Allah Bar Sarki was promoted to the position of *galadiman rumbu* on the advice of the *Mai Kudanadan*, possibly his sister and a concubine of the emir. See *ibid.*, 46. This *sarkin hatsi* was remembered as the father of Mai Kano, see interview with *Sarkin Hatsi* Sani, 31 December 1995.

notably the former *shamaki*, Sa'idu. Likewise, the rapprochement between Yahaya and Nuhu seems to have gradually eroded. Yahaya, the senior brother, lost the title and was increasingly isolated from palace affairs. He eventually moved out of the palace altogether.

As previously indicated, the pattern of family division and appointment was not restricted to the royal slave community. Indeed, Aliyu appointed a number of new Village Heads who supported him during the Civil War. D.F.H. MacBride noted that if a village head "sat still he proclaimed himself a Tukurist while his brother, nephew, cousin or other rival went to Takai to join the Yusufawa."[125] After Aliyu became emir, all of those who sided with Tukur were displaced: "In this distribution of spoils, known as 'basasa' (pillaging), a great many families lost headships which they had held for three or four generations of close association with their villages, and their offices passed to a succession of swashbucklers and speculators by way of pension or purchase."[126]

Most importantly, as M.G. Smith has indicated, many of Aliyu's appointments were a departure from Kano tradition and precedent. Aliyu deposed the *madaki*, which had never been done before. Smith argues that, freed from the restraints imposed from Sokoto, Aliyu deliberately and systematically concentrated power into his own hands. In order to control his brothers, Aliyu relied on a very powerful cohort of royal slaves, appointing Dankwari, a personal slave from Gwari, as *sarkin shanu*, normally a title held by the free born. Likewise, he

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[125]NAK SNP 17 30361.
[126]NAK SNP 17 30361.

dismissed the free Fulani gate-keepers and replaced them with royal slaves and made the chief of prisons (the *san kurmi* and *sarkin yara*) slave offices.[127] He also appointed the first *waziri*, a tile which had not been used in Kano previously. The *waziri* of Sokoto was even turned away from Kano: "4 months after his succession the Waziri of Sokoto came to Kano. He said he would place the turban on the head of Aliu. The Kano people refused to allow this and (they say) frightened away the Waziri.[128] However, by concentrating on discontinuities, Smith obscures the continuity of Aliyu's appointments. Since the time of Maje Karofi, wide-scale depositions had been common, as had a close reliance on personal slaves. Likewise, the appointment of slave *sarkin shanu* was paralleled by Maje Karofi's transfer of certain offices, namely the *dan sarai* and *sarkin dogarai*, to persons of slave status. Likewise, with one exception Aliyu retained the traditional distribution of offices to particular Fulani clans; thus, the office of *madaki* remained Yolawa despite being transferred to a different individual.[129] The British also put Aliyu's reign into the context of the broader sweep of Kano history:

> . . . the last few Emirs of Kano have been in the habit of making arbitrary appointments, ousting hereditary families in favour of their own relatives, transferring towns at will from one Hakimi to another, and, undermining their position by concentrating the power in the hands of their palace slaves.[130]

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[127]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 368.

[128]Lovejoy, Mahadi and Muhktar, "Notes on the History of Kano," 67. See Smith, *Government in Kano*, 351-375 for a complete description of appointments and depositions.

[129]Likewise, Aliyu's deposition of a number of territorial *tambari* chiefs had precedent during Bello's reign, who deposed *sarkin Rano, sarkin Dutse* and *sarkin Kura.* See Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule*, 52.

[130]NAK SNP 7/9 1538/1908. See also *Northern Nigeria Annual Report* 1902, 89, 109

Overall, Aliyu's reign reflected the importance and power of personality, and the establishment of personal ties to the royal household, in determining the course of official careers in the royal slave community. These ties had long been central to the conduct of political life in Kano. While Aliyu's freedom of maneuver was significantly increased both by his freedom from Sokoto and, ironically, his kinship ties to Sokoto via his mother, his response to political crisis and his solutions to dynastic rivalry did not depart in kind from the past (perhaps only in scale). Aliyu's enstrangement from Sokoto was also based on his enmity with Caliph Abdu Rahaman.[131] When Abdu Rahaman died, Aliyu repaired the breach. What *had* changed, as Smith rightly emphasizes, was that two formerly important ruling lineages, those of Bello and Usman, were largely eliminated from government and administration as a result of Aliyu's victory.[132] Thus Abdullahi Maje Karofi's lineage secured control of the throne and faced no immediate competition from another Sullubawa lineage. Moreover, it did so with the support of a large segment of the royal slave community, tied to the royal household by personalized bonds of *amana*. Nonetheless, the major Fulani clan-heads retained control of their positions and territories, although many of the territorial chiefships were transferred to different families and lineages who supported the

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[131]See Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, 261-265. Aliyu symbolically repudiated the suzerainty of Abdu when he refused to allow the *wazirin Sokoto* to place the turban of office on his head. According to W.F. Gowers, this "was an indication that the power and authority of Sokoto over the nominally subordinate Emirates had been greatly shaken." W.F. Gowers, *Gazeteer of Kano Province* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1921), 14. Also cited by Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, 261.

[132]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 359-360.

Yusufawa.[133] In this sense, Aliyu's reign was the culmination of personal and patrimonial rule, secured in large part by the support of elements within the royal slave community. They allowed Aliyu to appoint his brothers to positions of power, and thus bring them closer to the throne, and lessen the threat of rebellion, in direct contrast to Bello, who promoted his own progeny at the expense of nearly all of his brothers.[134] This was made possible because Aliyu centralized the control of Kano city and key units of the military in the hands of slaves who were loyal to his household and person. The Kano *mamluks*, as a community and as individuals, had become a vital and dynamic force in Kano political life.

Violence, Political Power and Royal Slavery

Why royal slaves? Aliyu, and other emirs, had social, economic and political obligations to their royal slaves. Economic and political patronage was dispensed by the emir to his royal slave community. This fortified the social bonds between emir and slave which granted royal slaves immunity from the possible consequences of some of their actions.[135] Writing in 1889, during the last years of Bello's reign, Paul Staudinger noted:

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[133]Smith, *Government in Kano*, 363-363. With the exception of the Danejawa who lost control of the office of *dan iya*.

[134]This is also emphasized by Smith, *Government in Kano*, 372. Aliyu did face at least two revolts among his kinsmen, one of which was quashed by royal slaves led by the *madakin danrimi*.

[135]See *Northern Nigeria Annual Report* no. 593, 1907-1908. A "well to do" man requested permission to return to his former position as a slave to the emir "in order to regain his old status and friendships in the Emir's household." The economic bond is emphasized by Nast, "Space, History and Power."

> Slaves of ministers or kings are often rewarded with high positions and many a freeborn man has to bow before them. They keep slaves themselves. The king's slaves often distinguish themselves by impertinent and violent behavior . . . it is best not to get involved in quarrels with them, as their owner, to whom they have made themselves indispensable usually lets them off scott free.[136]

These household bonds, and the political, social and economic culture they created, enabled royal slaves to use and manipulate violence in a manner which was less circumscribed than among the free.[137] Royal slaves could act and operate outside of the social conventions and norms governing political life. Indeed, to fail to acknowledge the social position of high status title-holders was a serious offense for a free born official; yet, as "outsiders" connected to the person and household of the emir, some royal slaves were indeed able to transgress these norms. When *Mabudi* Alhaji Sale was asked why *Shamaki* Salihi was so powerful he stated: ". . . because he had no obedience toward anybody except the emir."[138] Certainly, in practice slaves followed social and political conventions; they were not isolated from the patterns of Hausa and Fulani family and social life.

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[136]Paul Staudinger, *Im Herrzen der Haussaländer*, II, 72. See also NAK SNP 10/9 105p/1921: "In the eyes of the law all men are free, but we have to deal with actual facts-and an Emir's slave is a big man in Native Opinion. An Emir will as a rule suffer any blame or punishment which the actions of slaves have brought upon him, rather than go back on them; and he resents an attack on them individually . . . The reason is that an Emir who once did round one faithful slave would soon have no others, i.e. a slave is by his position incapable of being a responsible official, added to which he cannot transmit property to his children, he as a rule lives for nothing but the moment."

[137]See interview with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996: "The Sallama didn't come back because they don't want his presence in the palace because they know that he is very violent and they [the royal slaves] don't want peace, but those of nowadays want peace, they live peacefully with their followers."

[138]Interview with *Mabudi* Alhaji Sale, 11 January 1996.

Nonetheless, the perception was (and is) that slaves derived their position and power from their ability to operate outside these conventions should circumstances dictate such behavior. Thus, royal slaves could cross social boundaries, which both empowered them and made them extremely valuable to the emir.[139] This was paralleled by the association of royal slaves with participation in *bori*, and thus with the "transgression" of the boundaries and norms of Islam.[140] I do not intend to claim that royal slaves flouted family and kinship norms with wild abandon. They most certainly did not. However, they could be placed outside these governing norms by virtue of their relationship

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[139]The literature on transgression tends to approach the term as one category of "resistance" to the dominant social order. In this case, it was both a means for royal slaves to repudiate certain social values but was also a means to secure their service to and for the emir, thus reinforcing his dominance. As I have indicated previously, the duality expressed in this social relationship between slave and emir was the defining feature of the royal slave system. Although he concentrates on geography, see Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). On the creation of political space, see for example: Sandra T. Barnes, "Political Ritual and the Public Sphere in Contemporary West Africa" in David Parkin, Lionel Kaplan and Humphrey Fisher (eds.), *The Politics of Cultural Performance* (Providence: Berghan Books, 1996), 19-40.

[140]O'Brien emphasizes that *bori* was not simply a pre-jihad cultural "survival," nor was it simply the idiom through which resistance to the dominant Islamic discourse was expressed. Rather, "bori provides a means through which Islam has been interpreted and expressed in Hausa society: Islam and *bori* are thus mutually shaping." Susan O'Brien, "Spirit Possession as Historical Source: Gender, Islam, and Healing in Hausa Bori" (M.A., unpublished, University of Wisconsin-Madison,, 1993), 127. Participation in *bori* rituals was an extremely sensitive topic, and I was normally unable to pursue questions in any detail. This will no doubt be an important avenue of future research. Wada Dako, who lives outside of the palace, claimed that *bori* was commonly practiced by the emir's concubines, who were related to many royal slaves, and royal women. This was especially true of Katsina, where the senior wife of the emir was the head of *'yan bori*. See interview with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998 and Jean Boyd, *The Caliph's Sister: Nana Asma'u 1793-1865, Teacher, Poet and Islamic Leader* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 42-44. See also Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, I, 497: "[a] great deal of paganism [was] cherished, and rites really pagan [were] practiced in present day Kano." On *bori* see for example: Susan O'Brien, "Spirit Possession as Historical Source: Gender, Islam, and Healing in Hausa Bori," Renée Pittin, "Possession and Dispossession: Changing Symbolic Structures and Meanings in Contemporary Nigeria" in David Parkin, Lionel Kaplan and Humphrey Fisher (eds.), *The Politics of Cultural Performance*, 199-215 and M. Onwuejeogwu, "The Cult of the Bori Spirits Among the Hausa" in Mary Douglas and Phyllis Kaberry (eds.), *Man in Africa* (London: Tavistock, 1969).

with the emir and their status as slaves. They also derived power from their participation in the cultural and social system. Senior royal slaves (in terms of age) with ties to the royal house were granted the respect and deference from the young, even from princes, that was due free-born elders. While Alhaji Kabiru, the *shamaki* of the *turaki*, stated that the relationship between sons of slaves and the sons of emirs is friendly, he also noted that the sons of emirs feared their parents (and the *sarki*). Alhaji Kabiru thus on one hand downplays the conflict between slaves and the free born, while on the other he suggests that senior royal slaves had significant power over the emirs' own children:

> [The relationship between sons of emir and slaves is] cordial, especially since we grow together, attend school together, eat together, sleep together, dress together. In fact, we enjoy more privileges from the *sarki* than they. They fear our parents and the *sarki* more than we do.[141]

Slaves had this ability because: (1) they were slaves (2) they had ties to the royal house and (3) they were to a large degree protected from punishment by their relationship with the emir.[142] Even Abdullahi Bayero, who presided over the dispersal of powerful royal slaves from the palace to the countryside, maintained close ties to

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[141]Interview with *Shamakin Turakin Kano* Alhaji Kabiru, 21 August 1996. See also interviews with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996 and *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996.

[142]Their relationship with the emir also reinforced the social dominance of titled royal slaves among the broader palace slave community. Isyaku, interviewed in 1975, stated that one *shamaki*, probably Salihi (c. 1910-1926): "used to sell the Emir's slaves and keep the money whenever he liked, not as it is now." Indeed, the *shamaki* could grant slaves their freedom because: "he could do anything he like[d] with a slave, even sell them, although he would have to notify the Emir." Interview with Isyaku, 17 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

certain favourites of his youth, many of whom were royal slaves or related to former royal slave title-holders:

> in his private life the old man tended to seek solace in the company of the intimates of his youth, few of whom shared his spiritual and personal integrity . . . [although he would hear grievances and appeals in public rumour had it that] among his intimates a group of men, court officials and members of his household, who would readily twist or withhold evidence if adequately bribed. There was also secret trafficking in land and in public appointments.[143]

Although slaves had ties with free kinship networks, they were not always bound by the same conventions and social norms as free officials. For this reason people in the palace still remark that royal slaves could say anything to whomever they pleased, with the exception of the emir. This was especially true because the mother of the emir was usually a concubine, who was often related to others in the royal slave community.[144] For this reason, the emir had to show some slaves respect, as they were related, and in another sense, he was also more free to discuss private issues with his slaves because they were not "formally" members of his kinship network.[145] In 1975 Mohammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari noted that in the past the emir listened and talked with the *kasheka*, who was the Emir's favourite:

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[143]Byran Sharwood Smith, *Recollections of British Administration in the Cameroons and Northern Nigeria 1921-1957: "But Always as Friends"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1969), 270.

[144]During the reign of Abbas, for example, there were a hundred concubines in the palace. See interview with Alhaji Abdurahman, 28 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection.*

[145]See, for example: interview with *Maja Sirdi* Ibrahim, 20 August 1996: "the leader trusts you because he will keep his secrets in your hand and he will believe that you will never cheat him, and the title of *maja sirdi* is a very difficult title in that it has some secrets that can not be easily revealed to anyone."

"They told him the truth. They were inseparable."[146] Likewise, the *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu stated that *Sarkin Kano* Inuwa was raised by his own mother, and therefore obeyed her until he died.[147] To challenge or question a royal slave was effectively to challenge or question the emir. A.C.G Hastings noted in 1921 that even if the British insisted on the formal manumission of slaves before they were appointed to office, they still could "not ipso facto abolish their influence" because the social relationship between emir and slave would nonetheless persist.[148] Of course slaves had boundaries within which they carried out their duties, and the emir had to ensure that his slaves did not behave too outrageously. Although slaves were considered powerful because they had access to the person of the emir, the distinction was drawn between slaves, who could not leave the palace even if they were being "cheated," and servants, who could leave the palace any time they wished.[149] Thus, the tie to the emir could also serve as an instrument of domination and subordination. Royal slaves were not always empowered by this relationship, nor did they have absolute freedom of action inside the palace.

> The emir's children and the children of the slaves are like the children of two friends, because the slaves are always near the emir and they are feeling as if they are as powerful as the emir . . . The children of the emir Maje Karofi and *Dan Rimi* Nuhu are mixed in the school [at *Kofar Kwaru*] and the slaves are feeling the emirs are brought up in their houses and they study in the same

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[146]Interview with Mohammadu Sarkin Yaki Dogari, 28 September 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*. See also interview with *Sarkin Tambura* Idris, 20 August 1996.

[147]Interview with *Sarkin Ruwa* Sha'aibu, 12 August 1996.

[148]NAK SNP 10/9 120p/1921. See also NAK SNP 17/2 17496.

[149]Interview with *Sarkin Zage* Mohammad Bashir, 13 August 1996. See also interviews with *Makaman Dan Rimi* Mustapha, 26 July 1996, *Babban Zagi* Garba, 18 March 1998 and *Mai Unguwar Kutumbawa* Abubakar, 10 August 1996.

> schools . . . if you talk of power, they [the slaves] are [more] powerful than the children of the emir because they can remove him but the emir cannot remove them.[150]

Most of the preceding has concentrated on the social and cultural relationship between slave and emir. Ties of *amana* were also grounded in an economic relationship between master and slave in the Kano palace. While individual ties, household relationships and *amana* encouraged slaves to take sides during the *basasa,* so did their (well founded) belief that they would be rewarded for their efforts. Patronage emanated from the emir's household. The emir had access to the fruits of the tax system that he distributed throughout the palace community.[151] In the nineteenth century the emir provided concubines, slaves, food, horses, houses and other opportunities to acquire wealth to his most favoured royal slaves. The *shamaki* controlled the palace treasury,[152] and because state revenue was the property of the emir's household, the benefits of patronage enjoyed by royal slaves was in effect financed by the *talakawa.*[153] Royal slaves also had their own networks of patronage, based on their ability to extort bribes from persons seeking an audience with the emir and from those who hoped to bring a complaint to the emir's court.[154] They also acquired wealth by confiscating the property of the *talakawa* and

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[150]Interview with *Alkali* Husaini Sufi, 12 August 1996.
[151]See Staudinger, *Im Herrzen der Haussaländer,* II, 34.
[152]Smith, *Government in Kano,* 246.
[153]See NAK SNP 170p 108/1916: "As long as Chiefs took a share of taxes brought in, it was almost impossible to lay much stress on the distinction between Government Share and the share of the collector."
[154]Interview with *Dan Madanin* Alhaji Nura Mohammad, 9 March 1998.

through their role in the collection of taxation and land management.[155] The control of patronage helped to maintain and define the social and political relationships inside the royal household. It likewise served as a means to attach outsiders to slave households.

For royal slaves, the rewards of patronage, and the ability to distribute patronage, was an essential element in establishing one's position in the court. It provided royal slaves with the opportunity to increase the size of their households and to distribute material rewards to favoured kin and clients. Wealth thus provided individual royal slaves with stability and entrenched their positions in the palace. If a slave could not provide for his dependents, he risked the collapse of his household and his basis of power, as the current *Dan Rimi* noted in relation to the current state of the palace:

> Look at me now, I am just living among these people who do not care who I am. Probably even one of them can even beat me among the people in the household. Well we have to accept it like that. [In the past] This is my gate, whatever is in the field doesn't belong to anyone but it belongs to me. All these large fields, all the houses, they are my own. But now everything is taken away. We utilize only what is available to us. Now it is difficult to know who is under you.[156]

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[155]See interviews with Wada Dako, 14 March 1998, *Dan Madanin* Nura Mohammad 9 March 1998 and *Wakilin Gabas* Alhaji Mohammadu, 10 March 1998.

[156]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 July 1996. See also *Northern Nigeria Annual Report*, No. 594, 1907-1908: "[a royal slave requested permission to return to his former position as slave to the Emir in order to regain his] old status and friendships in the Emir's household." Interview with Alhaji Wada, 18 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*: "[royal slaves were unhappy when] "given their papers" [(freedom) by the British because being a slave of the Emir was] "part of their pride." Interview with Muhammadu Rabi'u, 13 July 1975, *Yusufu Yunusa Collection*: "[Palace] slaves . . . enjoy more than gandu slaves, they are very powerful. They can arrest a person in order to get money from him before they free him. Slaves living at *gandu* can only farm."

Specifically, royal slaves acquired houses from the emir as a form of patronage. After the Kano Civil War, Emir Aliyu rewarded his supporters by distributing land and houses. Emir Abbas later attempted a reconciliation with the defeated faction, and returned some of the property he had seized. As a result, a number of property cases came before the emir's court involving royal slaves. For example, Mohammad al-Amin, the son of *Dan Rimi* Nuhu, claimed a house which he had not occupied since "the day of the Basasa" from the clutches of Cigari, the son of the current *Sarkin Hatsi*. The house was returned.[157] Likewise, the *Barden Shamaki*, one of *Shamaki* Salihi's officials, and *Shettima* Bauchi, a powerful titled slave, were also brought before the court and forced to return land they had seized or were given during the *Basasa*. *Shamaki* Salihi clearly had more than one house in his possession:

> Then Barau from the community of Disu inside Kano city complained claiming a Basasa house which he had left since [Basasa] Wednesday from the Shamakin Kano Salih. He was summoned and he authorized his deputy to Emir Abbas, the Ubandawaki Yiguda. He said, "He has no justification. He knew the house was a Basasa house." So the house was taken from the Shamaki and returned to Barau, on the basis of *radd al-mazalim*.[158]

The emir had similar obligations to his own slaves and was expected to provide for them.[159] Personal ties and patronage both had central

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[157]NAK 1/2/1 Native Authority Series, cited by Allan Christelow (ed.), *Thus Ruled Emir Abbas*, 89.

[158]*Ibid.*

[159]Interview with *Kilishi* Mohammad Nasiru, 29 February and 2 August 1996 and Alhaji Muhktar Kwaru, 31 July 1996. See NAI CSO 26/11799 Vol. IV, Secretary of the Northern Provinces to the Chief Secretary, Lagos, 5 December 1936.

roles in maintaining the "bond" between emir and slave. The emir had obligations he had to satisfy in order to ensure that his slaves remained loyal. That bond was or would be broken if he let others make decisions about his own household. Thus, should an emir be unable to protect his own household, the "social" bond between slave and emir would be eroded. Royal slaves had reasons for accepting their status, as they had reasons for challenging it. But, their incorporation into the royal household was a central privilege they guarded, as it offered them influence and wealth, as demonstrated above by the careers of numerous royal slave officials.[160] The distribution of patronage reflected the importance of economic ties between royal slave and emir, and the manner in which royal slaves gained materially from their association with the royal house. This economic relationship, as well as individual *amana*, encouraged slaves to support either the Yusufawa or Tukurawa during the Kano Civil War.

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[160]This relationship persisted well into the colonial period, as H. R Palmer commented: "The reason for this is that an Emir who did once round on one faithful slave would soon have no others, i.e. a slave is by his position incapable of being a responsible official, added to which he cannot transmit his property to his children, he as a rule lives for nothing but the moment . . . In every case of which I have had personal knowledge where either Emirs have had to be deposed or Emirates have been running badly, and the deposition considered, one of the principal [sic] causes of the trouble has been 'Head Slaves'. There is an Arab proverb - 'A dog is always a dog, and a slave is always a slave'. In the eyes of the law all men are free, but we have to deal with actual facts - and an Emir's slave is still a big man in Native Opinion. An Emir will as a rule suffer any blame or punishment which the actions of slaves have brought upon him, rather than go back on them; and he resents an attack on them individually, as much as a European resents some other man beating his dog." NAK SNP 10/9 105p/1921.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the royal slave community and its role in the *basasa* of 1893-1895. It has reconstructed royal slave participation in the civil war, and argues that slave loyalties were based on ties of *amana* to certain individual households, not to the emirship as an abstract institution. This social relationship was founded on associations between royal slaves and sons of royalty that developed during childhood. In other cases, the relationship was mediated by the institution of concubinage. Emir Aliyu Babba's victory marked the culmination of royal slave power in Kano: they had set an emir on the throne after a bloody civil war. Indeed, slaves participated on both sides of the conflict; in the end, those who chose wrongly suffered, and were often severely punished by the new emir.

However, I have also argued that Aliyu's government was not a complete departure from past precedent, as argued by M.G. Smith. Aliyu's father (Maje Karofi) and uncle (Bello) had pursued similar agendas. They were, however, more constrained and restrained in their policies than was Aliyu. Aliyu came to power after a civil war, and was thus able to pursue a more independent course of action, within the limits set by his own supporters, who had demands of their own. Slaves also profited materially from their association with the royal household. The access slaves had to wealth was an important component of their social position in the palace. The emir also had a

responsibility to provide for his slaves, who looked to him as their source of economic prosperity.

Finally, I have argued that royal slaves were used in *basasa*, and more generally, throughout the nineteenth century, because they had easier recourse to violence than did members of the free elite. As slaves, they were able and expected to hold no loyalties to anyone except the emir, and they operated beyond the proscriptions of many of the free-born. This freedom was not absolute, of course, but was related to the fact that they both belonged and did not belong to the society in which they operated. This dynamic was central to ideology and operation of elite slavery throughout much of the Islamic world, and will be explored in a comparative context in the conclusion which follows.

Reflections and Conclusions

Power, Domination and Royal Slavery

The previous chapters have shown how the royal slave system in Kano must be viewed as part of a broader tradition of elite slavery in the Islamic world. Royal slavery was a dynamic institution that changed over time in the context of Islam and local historical events and circumstances. Indeed, Islam cannot be isolated as *the* single explanation for the use of royal slaves. Rather, Islam as a religion could generate problems of legitimacy and political authority. One solution to these political difficulties was the adoption of royal slavery as a governing institution. In Kano, the jihadists encountered a pre-existing royal slave system that influenced the manner and nature of the jihadists own use of royal slaves. The dichotomy between the jihadist and Hausa administration was not absolute; indeed, the Hausa rulers of Kano had been operating in an Islamic environment for centuries. Ibrahim Dabo and his successors borrowed extensively from the pre-existing administrative system. Other states of the Sudanic Belt, notably Borno, Dar Fur, Dar Masalit and Wadai, underwent similar historical processes. Thus, Kano was part of a broader Sudanic tradition of Islamisation, statecraft and royal slavery.

Overall, the adoption and development of royal slavery was associated with both nature and history of Islamic government and pre-*jihad* historical precedents and custom. These practices were a reflection of the style and form of government in Kano. The emir

governed Kano through the "royal household," to which royal slaves were attached via slavery and kinship. In Islamic legal terms "slavery grants a person ownership over another person, which means that the owner has rights to the slave's labour, property and sexuality, and that the slave's freedoms are severely restricted."[1] Of course, the relationship was more complex: slavery was also a means to recruit and socialize select slaves into the cultural world of the ruling elite. Slavery linked dependent individuals to larger aristocratic patronage networks. Thus, Ehud Toledano has emphasized for the Ottoman period that: "the dynastic rule of the 'House of Osman' was predicated upon the sustained loyalty and continued state service of a large dependent elite. The nucleus of this elite was provided by the *Kul*/Harem system."[2] Royal slavery was a means to expand the ruler's household and to ensure that capable and knowledgeable slaves were trained and attached to it. In this regard, royal slave systems across time and space shared much in common. In Kano, slave soldiers served similar functions to those of the Ottoman Janissaries: they counter balanced the forces raised by the aristocracy in the districts.

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[1]R. Brunschvig, "'Abd," in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1960), vol. I, 24-40, cited by Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4. See also al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-Mawa'iz wal-I'tibar bi-Dkikr al-Khitat was-Athar*, two vols. (Bulaq, 1270H and Baghdad, 1970), I, 97. Slaves, as objects, were considered part of the owner's property or *milk*. *Milk* was defined by al-Maqrizi as an object of purchase, sale, inheritance and donation. Cited by Sato Tsugitaka, "Slave Elites in Islamic History" (Unpublished paper, *Conference on Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, Tokyo, 10-11 October 1998), 3.

[2]Toldedano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 20. See also Gabriel Piterberg, "The Formation of an Ottoman Egyptian Elite in the 18th Century" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22/3 (1990), 275-289 and Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government* (New York, 1983).

The increasing militarization of the palace community, as demonstrated by Heidi Nast's work, and by the reliance on slave musketeers by the end of the nineteenth century, suggests an intensification of the conflicts between the royal household and the rest of officialdom.

The Kano *mamluks* were caught, enslaved, trained, mastered bodies of knowledge, and helped to govern and control Kano Emirate. As the nineteenth century progressed, slave titles were increasingly passed between and within slave families and households, the most prominent being the *Shamakawa, Sallamawa* and *Rimawa.* A slave community developed in the nineteenth century as elements of royal slavery in Kano became institutionalized. These royal slaves developed a cultural world that explained their positions, legitimated their participation in government, and tied them to the household of the emir. However, these ties were profoundly personal and individual. As the history of Emir Aliyu Babba and the *Basasa* demonstrates, royal slaves tended to focus their allegiance on one emir, although exceptions certainly existed to this general model. By tracing the history of offices and individuals, patterns of slave office-holding in the nineteenth century have emerged. The three senior slaves were regularly deposed by incoming emirs, who aimed to place their own favoured slaves in positions of power and influence. Occasionally, however, new emirs were simply unable or unwilling to depose certain slave title-holders if the slave in question had accumulated clients, knowledge and power.

Ibrahim Dabo established the foundations of the Kano *mamluk* system: he instituted the use of slave titles and appointed some of *Sarkin Kano* Alwali's former slaves to offices in order to benefit from their knowledge and political acumen. I have then charted the evolution of the institution as these slaves, and their descendents, founded slave households, instituted formal methods of acquiring and transmitting knowledge. These slaves "became" *mamluks* and thus gained access to fields of knowledge and skills otherwise unattainable, as discussed in Chapter Four. The use of the term *mamluk* is intended to convey the fact that royal slaves underwent parallel processes of acculturation and socialization: as they were made and shaped into *mamluks* they also reshaped and remade what it meant to be a *mamluk*. The means of acquiring slave titles was shaped by the formation and elaboration of royal slave households. Individuals and families developed claims to certain titles based on their control of the knowledge associatiod with the titles they held. This knowledge was "inherited" by members of royal slave families and households. In other cases, kinship ties allowed slaves to provide their progeny with access to titles and influence. Likewise, ties of "kinship" with the royal household provided another avenue to informally influence policy and to protect the place of individuals in the slave community.

Throughout the dissertation I have argued that royal slaves were indeed slaves, in contrast to much of the literature on elite slavery in the Middle East. This literature draws on some of the defining features of elite slave systems, especially slave access to power and

honour and the establishment of kin and family relationships, to argue that these individuals were not slaves. Rather, they were of slave "origin" as opposed to slave "status." In social and cultural practice, slavery resulted in the acquisition of high status. Thus, Toledano argues that a "*kul*/harem type" of slavery developed, and he places these royal "slave" office-holders closer to the side of "freedom" than slavery along the "continuum" model he proposes.[3] They developed households and kinship relationships and were integrated into the royal household as well. Although the sultan could in theory confiscate the property of these slaves or kill them without legal process, over time, confiscations and executions became infrequent. They were reserved for special cases and meant to reinforce the autocratic power of the sultan.[4]

> The overwhelming majority of high-ranking Ottoman officials of kul origins and training held their elevated, powerful positions with all rights and privileges and honors pertaining thereto . . . [it was] unusual to have officials disgraced after leaving office . . . rather, kuls of slave origins were often shielded by the intimacy and mutual reliance of the master-slave relationship in a way that free officials were not.[5]

For some scholars, the fact that royal slaves occupied positions of influence (and could thus exercise power) means that it is impossible to call them slaves: "Centuries of confusion have resulted from the misuse of the term slavery as an omnibus word to denote two disparate

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[3]Toledano, "The Concept of Slavery," 13-14.
[4]Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 20.
[4]*Ibid.*, 23.
[5]*Ibid.*, 24-27.

forms of it; the first, plantation and domestic slavery, the second, life-long military conscription."[6]

> It is unfortunate that we should be obliged to use the word 'slave' for persons of this status . . . For it is appropriate only in some ways . . . everyone that belonged to it [the ruling elite] was held still to be a slave of the Sultan, though only a small minority were really eligible to be any such thing. The conventional slavery of the rest had a painful and real quality, however. It was actual enough to cost them what may be termed their civil rights.[7]

However, royal slaves were perceived as slaves in Hausa and Fulani society. Slaves were not slaves simply because they performed manual labour in the fields and farms of the elite. In short, that royal slaves did not labour in those fields is not reason enough to claim that they were not "real" slaves.[8] Slave status was not restricted to lowly agricultural slaves because slave status was not tied solely to the types and kinds of labour slaves performed, although the rank, honour and social status applied to slaves could and did most certainly relate to the kinds of labour slaves performed.[9] Slave status meant that human beings were subject to the social, sexual, economic, political and psychological dominance of another. Their freedom was

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[6]Richard Hill and Peter Hogg, *A Black Corps d'Élite: An Egyptian Sudanese Conscript Battalion with the French Army in Mexico, and its Survivors in Subsequent African History* (East Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 4. See also Robert Irwin, 3-4.

[7]H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *The Islamic Society and the West* (Oxford, 1950), Vol I, 43-45. Quoted by Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 5.

[8]See David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 8-22. Davis also reaffirms the importance of slaves "as property" and slavery itself as a form of institionalized marginality.

[9]Likewise, a slave's juridicial status did not define his condition in practice; see for example Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974) and David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, 12-13.

profoundly and sometimes completely circumscribed. While the meanings of slave status and the forms that slavery took as an institution could and did vary with time and place, the discourse and practice of slavery made slaves unequal in a number of cultural, political, social or economic ways. Although this meant that some slaves were forced to perform menial tasks, many worked in positions which offered chances to achieve power and influence. All slaves, whether rich and powerul or destitute and powerless, were subject to the power of another in a manner that was particularly related to their status as slaves. In the case of the Kano *mamluks*, royal slaves were the property of the ruler, a fact that was part of a broader cultural and social discourse of domination and subservience which defined and shaped the royal slave system. This discourse constructed a social relationship between master and slave that was constantly subject to compromise and negotiation; but, it also resulted in the development of "royal slave" as a particular category of slaves. As Richard Harvey Brown argues: "Systems of classification provide ways to socially perceive and ignore, to recognize and misrecognize, to be and to act. Such classifying and naming not only are ways to make others do what one wants, but also to get them to *be* what one wants."[10]

In Kano royal slaves were never able to bridge the social distinction between slave and free which was vital to the construction and definition of status. As Chapter Two has indicated, the deposition of high status royal slaves was common throughout the nineteenth

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[10]Richard Harvey Brown, "Cultural Representation and Ideological Domination" in *Social Forces* 71, 3 (March 1993), 659.

century. Certainly, in Kano, executions of high ranking slave officials were rare; but royal slaves were subject to whatever punishment the ruler could devise. He could appeal to his slave kin, possibly even a daughter or sister who lived in the emir's household, but such executions were nonetheless seen as the legitimate and proper mandate of the ruler. This was not the case for free officials, who could not lose their heads to the executioner's sword simply because the emir wished it so. Of course, in practice, an emir's freedom of action was also circumscribed when he dealt with royal slaves. He most certainly had to take account of an individual slave's power, position and level of political support. However, the emir had different rights and obligations in relation to his royal slaves than free-men, a fact of which royal slaves were most certainly aware. For royal slaves, the *possibility* that they could be dismissed to a life of poverty and isolation, or even executed, constrained their ability to act as "free-men." This surely had an impact on what royal slaves thought possible, and how they viewed themselves and their world. Generally, disobedient slaves were transferred to the royal plantations outside the palace, where they were more isolated from their social and political networks. Others who were too powerful to remove physically lost their duties and responsibilties, which were shifted to other slaves in the hierarchy. Although they may have retained their formal *title*, the real basis of their power had been dramatically reduced, and, in many cases, eliminated. This robbed the slave of opportunities to exercise power, recruit clients and acquire wealth, all necessary

elements in establishing a successful career. In short, to be forced from the palace, from the side and favour of the emir and from royal slave households, was a powerful tool used by the emir to keep royal slaves under his control and domination.

To argue that the kinship relationships established by slaves (and the fact that they possessed positions of influence and power) meant they were not slaves is to miss *the* defining element of royal slavery; namely, that slaves felt it necessary to *attempt* to transcend their status as slaves. They felt it necessary to struggle against their positions as supposedly "kinless" beings. They felt it vital to create and develop kinship relationships with the free and slave elites because they would have otherwise remained much less than free. The fact that slaves could have kin should rather be seen as part of the ideological and cultural struggle royal slaves undertook to secure their positions of influence, and as an ongoing attempt to re-negotiate and re-construct the system of social, political and cultural domination that made them into slaves.[11] In Kano, at least, a slave was always a slave; slaves were never manumitted as a condition of service as some *Mamluk* and Ottoman officials were.[12] The assumption that slaves

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[11]See also Richard Harvey Brown, "Cultural Representation and Ideological Domination," 657-676.

[12]Manumission itself did not completely erase the slave status of an individual: "freedmen status was not an end to the process of marginalization but merely the beginning-the end of one phase, slavery, which itself had several stages." Thus, the master could continue to exact obligations and enforce subservience from his former slave. See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 62-65; 209-45 and Brion David, *Slavery and Human Progress*, 17. In the Sokoto Caliphate, it was customary for a number of slaves to be manumitted each year, they seldom returned to their old homes, and continued to reside with their old masters, still acknowledging them as superiors and giving them a portion of their earnings each year. See Denham, Clapperton and Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*, II, 336. See also Paul E. Lovejoy, "Murgu: The 'Wages' of Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Slavery and Abolition* 11, 2 (1993),

became kin is, I argue, to assume the point of view of the master.[13] Masters did not always open their arms wide to welcome those of slave status into their households and families; rather, royal slaves forced the recognition of their unique and high status by manipulating systems of kinship and household networks to their own advantage. Slaves could create and develop relationships with the royal household, but in the end they were only useful because they were never able to become "full" kin and members of the family.[14] Thus, the emir could use them to counterbalance the power of his own kin to transcend the limitations of his own constitutional and customary position. Although he has overstated the degree of "social death" which slaves underwent, Patterson does suggest that whatever the position of slaves as kin, they would never be completely assimiliated into the free household:

> . . . the liminality of the slave is not just a powerful agent of authority for the master, but an important route to the usefulness of the slave for both his master and the community at large. The essence of caste relations and notions of ritual pollution is that they demarcate impassable boundaries. The essence of slavery is that the slave, in his social death, lives on the margin between community and chaos, life and death, the sacred and the secular.[15]

159-189.

[13]This is, for example, the point of view taken by many British colonial officials; see Reginald Popham Lobb, Northern Nigerian Notes, MSS Afr. s.81, *Rhodes House Library*, "One result was the refusal of many, if not most, domestic slaves, to leave their masters. Such slaves were as a rule kindly treated as part of the family." Of course, as Lovejoy and Hogendorn have shown, many slaves simply could not leave their masters because they were forced into relationships of economic dependency. See, for example Lovejoy and Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery*.

[14]Even the decendents of slaves never acquired the "status of authentic kinsmen" in Africa. In times of crisis, for example, they were sold.

[15]Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 51.

Nonetheless, scholars working on royal slavery in the Middle East have generally (and correctly) argued that Islamic slave systems were defined by the variable power relationship between master and slave.[16] Slavery was a "social relationship." It was constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated, as slaves resisted and contested the control of their masters over their lives and their bodies.[17] This is indeed an important concept for understanding the cultural and social history of royal slavery. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity to explore the manner in which elite slaves interpreted, understood and assimilated their dual roles as bondsmen and government administrators or generals.[18]

Royal slaves had a large range of options open to them, and it is vital to pursue the "mutiplicity of relationships" that developed and occasionally transcended the master and slave relationship.[19] In Kano, royal slaves raised families, recruited clients and established social links with the royal household. Thus, in contrast to Meillassoux and Patterson, I argue that despite being theoretically kinless, slaves were not defined by their supposed "kinlessness." Rather, they used the instruments of their power and privilige to form ties of kinship and clientage in order to secure corporate, communal

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[16]Ehud Toledano, "The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies," 6-7. For a review, see Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 159-164. But, for a critical view, see Jay Spaulding, "Slavery, Land Tenure and Social Class in the Northern Turkish Sudan" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15/1 (1982), 1-20.

[17]See Dean A. Miller, "Some Psycho-Social Perceptions of Slavery" in *Journal of Social History* 18/4 (1985), 587-605 and Richard Harvey Brown, "Cultural Representation and Ideological Domination" in *Social Forces* 71/3 (1993), 657-676.

[18]A point emphasized by Toledano, "The Ottoman Concept of Slavery," 5.

[19]Toledano, "The Concept of Slavery," 9.

support. Furthemore, the over the course of the nineteenth century, royal slave kinship became a central element of royal slave identity. These slave families and households were more meaningful and dynamic than Patterson or Meillassoux's formulation of "fictive kinship" allows.[20] Families and households were places in which royal slaves were "socialized" and remade into honoured officials and statesmen.[21] Indeed, to dwell simply upon the biological family - lineage and blood relations - also obscures the fact that royal slaves developed social bonds that were not directly related to blood ties.[22] For example, slaves and princes in Kano developed social ties because they were raised together as children in slave households.[23] Likewise, concubines, some of whom were related by blood to royal slaves,

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[20]Dror Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family and the State in the Islamic Middle East" (Unpublished Paper, *Conference on Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, Tokyo, October 10-11, 1998), 8-9. See also Dror Ze'evi, "*Kul* and Getting Cooler: The Dissolution of Elite Collective Identity and the Formation of Official Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire" in *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11,2 (1996), 177-195 and Dror Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[21]Of course, as David Brion Davis notes, families were also the places where notions about authority, identity, rebellion and subordination were transmitted; in short, where power relationships were formed and defined. See Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, 16. See also James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London: HarperCollins, 1997). On households in the Middle East, see Jane Hathway, *The Politics of Household in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdaglis* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (eds.), *The Mamluk in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[22]See also Amira al-Azhary Sonbol, "Adoption in Islamic Society: A Historical Survey" in Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (ed.), *Children in the Muslim Middle East* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 45-67 and Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 28, cited by Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord," 10-11. Sahlins argues that kinsmen "were made as well as born" in the sense that people who lived and ate together formed important bonds. This is most definitely true, especially in regard to the formation of households. Slave "families" ate together in slave compounds inside and around the palace. Yet, slaves did not generally eat in the same household as the Emir.

[23]Interview with *Dan Rimi* Abdulkadir Kwaru, 17 March 1998. The father of the current *Galadima* was raised in the house of *shamaki*, as was Emir Inuwa. The current *Wakilin Arewa* was raised in the household of the *sallama*.

tended, supervised and mothered royal princes and other male children of the aristocracy. Thus, Ze'evi notes:

> I would like to dwell on another factor: the family as an agent of socialization and as a career springboard. This, it seems to me, is a singular Islamicate feature that enabled slaves to be accepted as equals and even as seniors. In other words, only meaningful integration into the household, as a special son of the master, enabled the slave to complete the metamorphosis from slave to lord.[24]

However, as noted above, in Kano royal slaves were simply not accepted as equals. According to David Brion Davis it is important not to exaggerate "the moral distinction between the supposedly benign paternalism of traditional household slavery and the supposedly absolute exploitation of plantation slaves."[25] Royal slaves struggled to develop kinship relationships and ties, and these ties were integral to family and social life in the palace, but they were also governed by social norms which left in no doubt who was free and who was slave. Certainly, the notion of a "contradiction" within slavery is important: this then allows for variations within slave statuses and positions. Yet, this continuum never included the "free." Bonds between slave and free were most certainly forged which transcended the master-slave relationship, but these bonds never formally developed into "family" relationships - with all the obligations and rights such relationships imply. The relationship between master and slave could be (and was) carried out in the idioms of kinship,[26] and these

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[24]Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord," 8.
[25]David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, 12-13.
[26]See Paul Forand, "The Relation of the Slave and the Client to the Master or Patron in Medieval Islam," 59-66.

relationships transcended the master-slave relationship especially as a result of ties established through concubinage; nonetheless, slaves were not conceptualized or treated as "sons." Otherwise, why not simply use and employ sons in the positions reserved for slaves? In Kano, royal slaves acquired position and influence because as slaves, they could to a degree operate outside the political rivalries of free officials, as was demonstrated in Chapters Three and Five; yet, even as slaves they constructed ideologies of kinship and family which helped perpetuate the institution and their own positions as favoured and powerful officials, as discussed in Chapter Two and Three. In short, royal slaves were used in government because initially they were socially isolated. They had no families to support or sustain them. Over time, however, royal slaves developed households and kinship networks despite being theoretically denied such networks, as a means to reduce their dependence on the ruler and aristocracy. Despite the fact that the institution of slavery had the fundamental component of no kinship, royal slaves were human beings and therefore created structures of kinship and quasi-kinship. In Kano they never succeeded in becoming honoured free persons, but the households they created, and the positions they held, encouraged both "free" and "slave" to regard them with "honour."

Royal slaves were not defined entirely by slavery; instead, they defined some of their own social and cultural norms in opposition to the ideology of the dominate elite. This process has been reconstructed using the voices and histories of the royal slaves

themselves. Although they were most certainly not the "wretched of the earth," their history to a large extent remained unrecorded and unwritten. I have tried to explore the history of royal slavery "from the inside," in the language of the nineteenth century palace community. The perceptions, beliefs and ideology of royal slaves dramatically shaped not just the institution of royal slavery but, for good or ill, the entire history of nineteenth century Kano.

Overall, the institution of royal slavery developed in the broader context of the history of Islam, Islamic government and state formation in the Sokoto Caliphate. Royal slaves were used in other emirates, notably: Katsina, Zazzau, Daura, Hadejia, Kazaure and in Sokoto itself. Indeed, the reasons and the justifications for the use of royal slaves were similar throughout much of the Caliphate. The Sokoto Caliphate was tied together by the ideology and religion of Islam, which was itself a dynamic force in the nineteenth century. As part of this larger state, Kano looked to Sokoto for religious guidance and legitimation; before Dabo revived the royal slave titles he wrote to Mohammad Bello, asking for permission, which Bello granted, a recognition of the importance of royal slavery for the stability and security of the emirates and thus the Caliphate as a whole.

In short, the *mamluk* system in Kano was part of a broader, Caliphate-wide *mamluk* system: slaves served in and commanded armies, collected taxes, supervised plantations, served as gates for information and were generally agents of state centralization. In Kano, the system was extremely developed and elaborate, more so

than any other emirate in the Caliphate. The development of Kano's *mamluk* system was tied to a number of broader Caliphate policies, especially Bello's support of fortified settlements or *ribats* which encouraged the use of slave soldiers. Overall, the establishment of the Caliphate marked a watershed point in the history of Hausaland, as reinvigorated and reinvented Islamic ideology and instititions spread throughout the new state, including the systematic use of royal slaves.

Ironically, royal slaves also played a prominent role in establishing a more independent relationship between Kano and Sokoto after the Civil War. Their interests were firmly aligned with the victorious emir of Kano, and true to the history of the *mamluk* institution in other places and times, they acted to preserve their own communal interests by supporting Aliyu Babba. In conclusion, the previous chapters have charted the historical intersection between Islam, slavery, political ideology, local conditions, and the actions of the slaves themselves in the formation, development and evolution of a formal Kano *mamluk* system that grew to become a central feature of emirate government and adminstration in Kano, and the entire Caliphate, over the course of the nineteenth century.

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